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ABSTRACT

During 1983, an observational study was carried out in four classrooms in two schools in Wellington, New Zealand, with the following objectives in mind: (1) to describe the different writing tasks, assigned to the students, (2) to outline the guidance students were given in order to help them complete their writing tasks, (3) to establish which strategies students adopted in order to carry out written tasks, and (4) to determine some of the difficulties students encountered with writing and how they coped with these difficulties. The schools consisted of an intermediate and a secondary school. Brief conversations with the teachers and case study students occurred daily throughout the study. Findings showed that, typically, intermediate school students' written work was brief in nature (consisting of single sentences or short paragraphs), tended to be descriptive or factual, and was often copied. Secondary school students' written work was also relatively brief (commonly from one to three sentences in length except in English class where short paragraphs were often required), usually descriptive and in response to questions set by the teacher, and often copied or derived from passages in folders or notes on the blackboard. (HOD)

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A MONTH'S WRITING IN FOUR CLASSROOMS

David Philips

In association with
Ian McLachlan and Neil Reid

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New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Wellington,
May 1985

(e.g., size, location, social and economic composition of the pupils),

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(1) Language Study

1. INTRODUCTION

There can be little question that written language plays a crucial role in our schools. It is regarded as one of the central tasks of schools to teach children how to write, not just for their own personal development and intellectual growth but because writing is an essential mode of communication. Despite new trends in the computing world, writing is likely to remain an integral part of many vocations; it is also a fundamental tool for social purposes and a key aid to learning. There is now a heightened interest in New Zealand in the teaching and learning of writing, partly because of developments overseas but also partly because there is a growing awareness of its significance and of our current lack of knowledge about the best ways to teach writing.

Writing seems to be a poorly understood area of the curriculum. Our knowledge of writing, which includes all the activities at both primary and secondary schools which involve any kind of written work, is therefore relatively scanty and haphazard, despite new developments such as the writing process approach (mainly associated with Donald Murray and Donald Graves). Even though schools appear to foster many of the conditions which enable pupils to improve their handling of written language, no one knows precisely which aspects of writing are given most emphasis in our schools, nor what pupils are asked to write about

(i.e., the range of written tasks), nor how pupils are assisted in carrying out different kinds of written work, nor which methods of evaluation are most often used by teachers to check their pupils' attainment. There is a distinct lack of baseline data of this kind.

There are other gaps too: very little of a systematic nature is known about the writing difficulties pupils experience at different class levels, how pupils actually increase their mastery over various types of writing as they move through the education system, and which teaching practices are most effective for encouraging the acquisition and use of writing skills across a wide range of writing tasks.

Once we have a reasonably accurate account of the approaches used to teach writing, of the kinds of written work pupils carry out and of the amount of writing pupils do at each level of the school system, then a more detailed investigation can be made of ways to encourage the development of those procedures which pupils require in order to write successfully. This preliminary gathering of information should also suggest aspects of the teaching and learning of writing which need further study, and provide part of the groundwork for an overarching theory of the acquisition of writing techniques and their application to a variety of writing tasks. It would seem that teachers and curriculum planners would then be in a sound position from which to develop more appropriate writing activities for primary and secondary pupils, to make recommendations about possible changes in emphasis required to modify current instruction techniques, and to develop useful measures to help teachers evaluate their pupils' writing efficiently.

During 1982, planning was underway for New Zealand's participation in the IEA: Study of Written Composition. Aware of the need for some research that would complement that international project and help to fill some of the gaps described above, officers of NZCER's Measurement and Evaluation Unit put together a set of research proposals entitled 'Research on Writing: Possible Studies'. Examples were provided of various approaches which could be used to investigate the teaching, learning and evaluation of writing in New Zealand schools. These 'starting-points' were then offered for comment to the Curriculum Development Unit of the Department of Education, and it was decided to carry out two of the studies proposed.*

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* The second study, *Teaching Writing Across the Curriculum*, is a national survey of methods used to teach writing in New Zealand schools and will be reported separately.

The first study examines in detail some of the actual contexts in which written work is produced. Before launching into a programme of research which would test specific hypotheses about the teaching and learning of writing and how written work is used for different purposes, it was considered essential to conduct a preliminary investigation of this type which would describe how a small number of teachers actually conduct their 'writing sessions' and what pupils do when they are engaged in activities which entail writing. In addition, samples of pupils' work could be examined, together with comments from teachers and pupils about the written work undertaken in their class. The study was not concerned with assessing the quality of the pupils' writing, however, nor with analysing its content.

During 1983, therefore, an observational study was carried out in two schools in the Wellington region. For a period of about five weeks each, four classes (one Form One, a Form Two, a Form Three and a Form Four) - both teachers and pupils - were systematically observed with the following aims in mind:

1. to describe the different writing tasks assigned to the pupils;
2. to outline the guidance pupils were given in order to help them complete their writing tasks;
3. to establish which strategies pupils adopted in order to carry out written tasks;
4. to determine some of the difficulties pupils encountered with writing and how they coped with these difficulties.

Naturally, it was accepted that the data obtained from observations, interviews and samples of written work in four classrooms alone, in just on a month in each case, would not provide a comprehensive picture of how writing is taught or how all pupils approach written work. But this was not the purpose of the study, especially since the resources necessary for such a time-consuming and costly project were not available. At the very least, this account of writing activities should serve as a source of valuable information from which key issues associated with the teaching and learning of writing skills will emerge. The best ways of encouraging the development of written language have yet to be determined. This study is intended to be a small contribution towards that goal.

2. HOW WAS THE STUDY CARRIED OUT?

I Timing

The sets of observations were carried out during 1983. The intermediate school was visited for five consecutive weeks from July 18, with one researcher attached to the Form One class, the other to the Form Two, and the secondary school for six weeks from September 17 with one researcher for the Form Three class, the other for the Form Four. The observations, collections of writing samples, and conversations ('interviews') with pupils and teachers were undertaken during these periods only.

II Participants

A *The Researchers*

Three researchers were involved in the study, two NZCER research officers and a local reading adviser. Given the exploratory and reasonably demanding nature of the proposed studies, the researchers had to be:

(i) based in Wellington, in order to minimise costs;

(ii) at least familiar with educational research, even if they had not conducted such research previously;

On the board were written these questions:

(iii) keen to take part in a study of children's writing, with a special interest in the teaching or evaluation of written language; and

(iv) experienced in teaching writing and related aspects of English or language, either at the intermediate or secondary school level.

In order to ensure that the research team shared the same emphases in conducting their observations and conversations, detailed briefing sessions were held both prior to the launching of the study and during its course. At each level, data gathering, data analysis and report writing were carried out by the researcher who had made the observations.

B *The Schools*

Because of the intensive nature of the study, financial considerations, and the time commitment required (a large part of most school-days for several weeks), for convenience two schools in the Wellington region were chosen representing a broad cross-section of the Wellington population.

The *intermediate school* is a typical urban intermediate with pupils coming from a range of suburbs, and socio-economic and ethnic groups. The school's roll is 545. The staff is well-established and organised on a syndicate basis with considerable autonomy for the syndicate groups. Classes are not streamed.

The *secondary school*, on the outskirts of Wellington, has a relatively isolated position between newer, privately-owned housing and a large area of State houses. Although most of the pupils are European, about 28 percent are Maori or Polynesian. It is a comparatively new school with about 1000 pupils in unstreamed classes.

C *The Teachers*

All participating teachers were well-informed before observations began about the reasons for the writing study. It was hoped that the openness characterising the data gathering phase would encourage the teachers to take part with a minimum of apprehension. All materials gathered were freely available for inspection at any time, though in practice none of the participants took up the opportunity to examine them in detail.

The *intermediate school* teachers who took part in the study were selected by the principal and were very different in their backgrounds and professional approaches. The Form One teacher was relatively junior in service (although a mature entrant); the Form Two teacher was a senior teacher and a syndicate leader with a varied career in teaching that covered a number of class levels in two countries. Both were competent professionals with a particular interest in intermediate school teaching, but with rather different teaching styles.

The *secondary school* teachers were also selected by the principal. Six teachers were involved, one each of Science, English and Social/Economic Studies, for both Forms Three and Four. For Form Three, both the English and Social/Economic Studies teachers had taught for about five years, while the Science class was taken for most of the study by a mature student (and, subsequently, by the Form Four Science teacher). For Form Four a fourth-year English teacher, a second-year Science teacher and a more experienced Social/Economic Studies teacher with about ten years' teaching service took part. All were dedicated teachers with a variety of extracurricular interests.

D *The Classes*

The students taking part at all levels were also informed of the purpose of the study. It was hoped that by staying with the classes for several weeks the researchers would be trusted by the students, and that the students would openly talk about aspects of their writing which particularly interested the researchers.

The *intermediate school* classes: the Form One class had 28 pupils when the study started, although a pupil who had left earlier in the year returned making a total of 29 when the observations ceased. It was a heterogeneous class with the pupils divided into three ability groups, though the composition of the groups varied occasionally according to the subject-area involved.

The class contained pupils from diverse backgrounds: 17 of the pupils could be described as European (including one Polish girl and a Greek boy) while, of the remainder, 2 were Indian, 3 Maori and 6 Samoan. Seven of them were considered by their teacher to speak English as a second language. Ten children attended a remedial reading session for 45 minutes per day.

The teacher did not consider that this class was truly representative of the intermediate school chosen for the study. Apart from the large number of children receiving specialist assistance, one of the former pupils in the class had died suddenly in March, while in the second term another pupil was transferred to the class after he had suffered a traumatic emotional experience.

The Form Two class had 33 pupils throughout the study, and was also heterogeneous with three ability groups. It had a small number of pupils from non-European backgrounds (an Indian, a Chinese and two Polynesians).

The *secondary school* classes: both the Form Three and Form Four classes were non-streamed and therefore had a relatively wide range of ability amongst the pupils. There were 27 pupils in the Form Three class and 30 in the Form Four one. Though predominantly European both classes had Maori and Polynesian students: 8 in Form Three and 6 in Form Four. Some of the third formers were described as poor in basic skills and often disruptive. The fourth form class, on the whole, was of higher ability and well-behaved.

E *The Case Study Pupils*

After the first two or three days of observation, the teachers of each class were asked to identify 4 children who represented different degrees of facility in coping with classroom writing tasks: one child who was a very capable writer, two whose written work was considered to be about average and one who had difficulties of a reasonably severe nature with writing. These 'case study pupils', 16 altogether, were the focus of special study involving the observations, interviews and collection of written samples. Brief descriptions of these pupils are given with the writing profiles, which conclude the sections discussing written work at each level.

III Procedures

The underlying assumption of the study was that the most appropriate way, initially, to investigate the teaching and learning of writing skills, and the uses made of written work, was to sit in a classroom where writing activities were 'in session' and to observe what the teacher and pupils were actually doing, without in any way interfering with the conduct of the lesson. As a result, emphasis was given to actions which could be

seen rather than to inferred processes such as cognitive or affective changes. Also, because of the brief period involved, no attempt was made to measure developmental changes in individual pupils.

Our model was Nicholson's approach, as reported in *A Study of Reading and Learning in the Junior Secondary School Classroom.* This study incorporated intensive classroom observations, teacher interviews and selected pupil case studies in order to examine the reading demands placed on students in their first two years at secondary school, and how the students coped with these demands. Although Nicholson's study had a different focus, spanned a longer period than was envisaged for our investigation, and entailed more extensive use of tape-recorded transcripts, the participant observation and concurrent interviewing techniques used seemed the most promising available, given the nature of our enquiry.

Before the observations began, a brief pilot study in a Wellington full primary school was carried out by the researcher co-ordinating the main study. Over a two-week period pupils and teachers in several classes were observed while they were carrying out writing activities. Short interviews were undertaken, covering a variety of topics such as the requirements of particular tasks, the problems pupils encountered in carrying out the writing tasks and the pupils' attitudes towards their own written work. In this way many of the procedures used in the main study were developed and tried out, e.g., a list of questions on teaching methods to ask the teachers, another set on writing behaviours for the pupils, and a method for noting relevant activities to be observed in the classrooms.

A *Observations*

1. *When?*

At the *intermediate level,* an observer endeavoured to be in the classroom at all times scheduled for writing. The observer was also present when the pupils were engaged in other kinds of language activities if these were likely to result in written work, such as a class discussion introducing a topic which pupils would then be asked to write on, or reading parts of a book prior to answering questions about it. However, Maths, Physical Education and Technicraft were excluded.

In the *secondary school,* the classes chosen were observed for

all timetabled periods of English, Science and Social/Economic Studies, core subjects taken by all the third and fourth form students. These major content areas were chosen on the assumption that they were more likely to require written work from students than other subjects taught at the school.

2. *How?*

In order to compile a reasonably detailed outline of the teachers' methods and the pupils' writing activities over a period of about one month, a standard recording form was used to gather the following information:

(i) the time spent on discrete writing activities;

(ii) the precise nature of the activity engaged in (e.g., 'discussing the contents (pp.3-7) of a booklet on whales called ...');

(iii) the teaching methods used (e.g., discussion of writing tasks, pupil choice of topics, motivation provided);

(iv) teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions (e.g., the amount of work done individually or in groups, assistance provided by the teacher while the pupils wrote);

(v) the equipment used for writing;

(vi) the amount and types of writing done (e.g., language exercises, dictation, notemaking, stories);

(vii) difficulties experienced by individual pupils;

(viii) the approaches adopted by pupils towards different writing tasks;

(ix) the evaluation of pupils' written work (e.g., whether oral or written feedback was provided, whether marks or grades were awarded);

(x) any other aspect involving writing which the observer considered significant.

B *Interviews*

Brief conversations with the teachers and case study pupils occurred daily throughout the study. Different kinds of information were sought from the teachers: the main characteristics of the school

(e.g., size, location, social and economic composition of the pupils), its internal organisation (e.g., class size), the resources available for writing, features of the classroom (e.g., displays, desk arrangement), significant characteristics of the pupils as a group (e.g., their attitudes towards the subject and written work in it), differences among the case study pupils and so on. In addition, comments were sought from the teachers on the writing which the pupils were asked to do: the objectives of separate writing tasks, how the pupils were expected to cope with different tasks, how writing difficulties were handled and so on.

Once the observations had been completed, a formal, but friendly, tape-recorded interview was carried out covering such matters as the methods employed for teaching writing in the school, additional comments on the pupils selected for more detailed study and appraisals of their written work. Also, the teachers were invited to complete a questionnaire entitled 'Teaching Writing Across the Curriculum' (used in a national survey), which covered such aspects as the pupils' responses to writing, the kinds of writing carried out, the evaluation of pupils' written work and the organization of the teaching of writing in the school. Responses to this questionnaire were used as additional information on the teachers' practices and attitudes towards writing.

The case study pupils were asked about each piece of writing they worked on in class, and the questions covered the pupil's approach to the writing task, any problems encountered and how these were resolved (if at all), whether the writing was revised or edited, the help received from the teacher or other pupils, and so on. These daily conversations were often very brief (less than one minute sometimes) in order to keep disruption to the flow of writing to a minimum. It was considered important to discuss with the pupils what they were writing while they were actually producing words, but not to the extent that they were prevented from writing. Consequently, depending upon the stage reached in a writing task the number of questions asked at any one time varied considerably from pupil to pupil.

In addition, the conversational exchanges did not follow a rigidly predetermined sequence. This was not considered necessary as the topics were varied and discrete. Also, as it was essential

to maintain a friendly, non-threatening atmosphere for the duration of the study, on those rare occasions when a pupil was unresponsive or extremely hesitant the interviewer would either finish the conversation or change the order of presentation of the questions so that the pupil would not feel unduly pressured. Those questions not covered were simply left until the next conversation occurred with the pupil.

Conversations were either recorded on tape and transcribed later, or, alternatively, the pupils' comments were summarized on the observation sheets together with remarks about aspects of special interest to the observer. It was possible to adopt this practice because of the comparative brevity of many of these exchanges, and the repetitive nature of some of the questions asked (see Appendix A).

A formal interview was also conducted which tried to establish the views pupils had towards writing compared to other language modes, whether they wrote outside school and how they learned to write (see Appendix B).

C *Writing Samples*

Apart from daily descriptions of writing activities and notes on the teachers' and pupils' behaviour, samples of written work were also collected and photocopied. At the *intermediate level*, no attempt was made to collect everything that the pupils wrote over the five weeks, although samples of each type of assigned writing were gathered from the pupils selected for detailed study.

For the *secondary school* classes, a slightly different focus was adopted to ensure that as much writing as possible from the three subjects English, Science and Social/Economic Studies was collected from the case study pupils. On several occasions, therefore, their exercise books were gathered and recent work photocopied in order to obtain comprehensive samples covering the whole observational period.

D *Analyses*

Using the notes made during daily observations of writing activities, for each class observed:

(i) the writing tasks which the pupils were assigned were classified according to length;

(ii) the data were examined so that comment could be made on the following topics:

(a) the kinds of writing which pupils were typically expected to carry out;
(b) the time allowed for different kinds of writing;
(c) the organisation of the class for writing activities;
(d) the teacher's behaviour during writing activities;
(e) the assistance given to pupils experiencing difficulty with some aspect(s) of writing;
(f) the practices adopted for evaluating written work.

Excerpts from interviews and extracts from the writing samples have been included to illustrate some of the issues discussed.

The writing samples collected from the case study pupils were used as the basis for the 16 pupil profiles, which are intended to be accurate portraits of the approaches adopted by these classroom writers, the difficulties they encountered in their writing and the quantity of writing they produced during the period observed, as noted by the researchers. In addition, comments made during the conversations and interviews with the teachers and the pupils themselves have been incorporated to fill out these profiles.

For each level, i.e., intermediate and secondary, an overall view ('interpretation') of the practices adopted to teach writing or explain activities requiring written work has been provided. These chapters also incorporate a discussion of the common features and major variations in the approaches adopted by the case study pupils.

A brief summary which attempts to draw conclusions about the writing activities observed across all four classrooms concludes the comparisons of the teachers and pupils, and makes some suggestions for further research.

3. WRITTEN WORK IN THE FORM ONE CLASSROOM

I Writing Tasks Set

A *Activities Involving Writing*

Over the month, pupils carried out a relatively wide range of written tasks, from copying words in a list to composing stories based on their own topics. The following list illustrates the different types of writing done in this classroom.

WRITING OBSERVED IN THE FORM ONE CLASSROOM

(i) Language Study (e.g., copying handwriting from blackboard, syllabifying words)
(ii) Copying Notes from blackboard (e.g., filling in words from a list within a 'text' to be copied)
(iii) Sentence Completion (e.g., 'I really like ...')
(iv) Comprehension Exercises (e.g., questions on Flailing Fists)
(v) Descriptions (e.g., 'Boot' exercise)
(vi) Notetaking (e.g., Ancient Egypt project)
(vii) Captions for a picture-book (e.g., on friendship)
(viii) Story on set topic (e.g., adventures of an archaeologist)
(ix) Story from list of own topics.

(i) Language Study

One of the most common writing activities pupils were required to do was the handwriting exercise. Thus on one occasion, after some comment from the teacher and a brief demonstration on the board of the task's requirements, pupils copied the following letters and words into their Spelling and Handwriting exercise books:

h h h h
the the the
the bush to catch
birds for food

In addition, pupils in two of the three groups in the class were asked to copy several words connected with earthquakes from a unit on earth science they were about to complete: avalanche, seismic, composition, tectonics, porous, geyser, interior, dormant, continental, exterior, as they were to be tested on their spelling the next day. Pupils in the other group were given these words to study: corner, rumble, roar, jolted, thud, grey, chimney, terraces, froze, fright, crying.

The day after, while some pupils wrote out each word after listening to the teacher pronounce it and use it in a sentence, the rest of the class practised handwriting. After the 'test', pupils exchanged their exercise books and checked the spelling of the words themselves. Incorrect words were to be written out ten times each. As well, pupils carried out some language exercises: finding the meaning of five words used in the spelling test; using four words from the test in sentences; syllabifying six of the words.

Occasionally, other activities similar to these were undertaken, though not during the allotted spelling/handwriting time. Once, for example, after listening to the teacher discuss the answers to some questions set on a previous day, pupils were asked to write down all the words in the passage which contained the notion of noise, then the words denoting movement. Finally, they were asked to put an adverb in front of these verbs: grabbed, sat, writing, dancing, playing, etc. One other day, some pupils were presented with a list of nine definitions, such as 'hole made in rock to receive the dead', 'ancient copier of manuscripts', 'ornaments worn on the body', to match with these words: mummy, pharaoh, pyramid, hieroglyphics, etc.

(ii) Copying Notes

Another type of writing set by the teacher required pupils to copy a passage from the blackboard from which certain words had been deleted. The omitted words were provided, however, and pupils selected the appropriate word for each gap, a task made considerably easier by the teacher's practice of supplying the first letter of each of the missing words.

Most of the pupils were asked to complete this passage about earthquakes:

Earthquakes

earthquake
seismographs
shaking
movements
earth
earthquakes
rock
deeper
city
crust
zone
ruins
subcrust
originated
world
slip
faultline

An e_____ is the s_____ of the e_____ surface. It happens when beds of r_____ shift very slightly. A movement of a few inches is enough to bring a c_____ down in r_____.

Some parts of the w_____ are particularly liable to e_____s. In the Northern hemisphere, the earthquake z_____ includes Japan, the East and West Indies and Southern Europe. Sometimes the rocks s_____ along f_____ l_____. But sometimes the movement is much d_____ within the c_____ or s_____ c_____.

Most countries of the world now have sensitive instruments called s_____s which measure the slightest m_____s in the earth's surface. From these records it is possible to calculate where an earthquake o_____.

The remainder, however, were given a radically simplified version to complete, with more letters of the words included in the gaps, a much shorter set of words to choose from and with the listed words in almost the same order as they appeared in the passage:

Earthquakes

earthquake
shaking
rocks
ruins
city
movement
crust

(1) An e_____e is the sh_____ of the earth surface.

(2) Earthquakes happen when ro_____ shift very slightly.

(3) A movement of the earth is enough to bring a whole ci_____y down in ru_____s.

(4) Sometimes the mo_____t is deep within the earth's cr_____.

Often, while a small group of pupils continued with their own work, particularly for Social Studies units, the others would copy into their books a passage from the blackboard, such as one on papyrus:

> *'Papyrus is made from the pith of a reed which grows in the water. Ancient Egyptians wrote on papyrus. The papyrus grows along the River Nile. The word 'paper' comes from 'papyrus' which is made by laying strips from the stem lengthwise and crosswise until a thick sheet has been formed.'*

and one on the Pharaoh:

> *'The Pharoah(sic) is the ruler of all Egypt. His subjects believe that he is a god in the body of a man and think that he can do no wrong. He is so well thought of that people have to kneel down before they speak to him.'*

Such tasks were preceded by discussion and interpretation of diagrams, pictures, objects, and word meanings. The copying, therefore, was not merely an exercise in reproducing words.

(iii) Sentence Completion

One example of this type of writing is the exercise given to pupils after a class discussion on likes and dislikes. On a double page in their 'This is Me' exercise books pupils set out these statements: 'I really like ...', 'I'll never forget ...', 'What really bothers me is ...' and 'I like the way I ...'. Pupils were free to complete the statements as they wished, although the setting out was expected to be done as follows in their 'This is Me' book (a collection of similar tasks):

I really like ...	*I'll never forget ...*
What really bothers me is ...	*I like the way I ...*

(iv) Comprehension Exercises

On one occasion pupils were asked to answer a set of questions on a passage that had been read to them the day before (a story called 'Flailing Fists'*). The questions followed the passages in a section entitled 'Looking Back'. Pupils were expected to write the question out first, to underline it, to supply an answer with the first part quoting the words used in the question, to use refill paper and to head it up 'Flailing Fists'. Before starting on the questions, the class was seated on the floor in front of the teacher and any terms which the pupils were likely to be unfamiliar with, such as 'approved school', were discussed.

A similar activity, perhaps closer to notetaking, required pupils to read an article from school journals and to answer questions on it from a list written on a sheet of white paper attached to the blackboard. Three separate groups of pupils were involved. One group, for example, read 'Hunting for Sapphires' (Part 4, No. 1, 1979) and considered these questions:

1. *What factual information did you find out about sapphires?*
2. *Where do you find sapphires?*
3. *How do you go about collecting sapphires?*
4. *How many different types of sapphires can be found?*
5. *What type of equipment is needed in the search for sapphires?*
6. *Who would buy sapphires and what would they be used for?*
7. *How many types of animals are mentioned in the story?*
8. *What does 'specking' mean?*

Underneath the list of questions were these instructions:

> *This must be done in the back of your language books. Write out each question and underline it first. Take 6 lines to answer each question.*

Fewer lines were expected from the other groups: 4-5 from one, 3 from the other.

(v) Descriptions

One day, the class was seated on the floor in front of the teacher looking at a pair of muddy boots, discussing such topics as: 'Why did this boot come apart? Why is it muddy? What's this bit for? What sort of weather were they walked in?'. The pupils were then set the task of drawing the outline of a boot on a large piece of white paper (for which they were given 5 minutes) and, within this shape, to write a description of the boots.

---

* Boomer and Hood, Book 1: *Sandals in One Hand.*

On the board were written these questions:

Boots

Describe the boots and where they have been worn.
What purpose would these boots have served?
Who would have worn these boots?
What sort of person would have worn them?
What do you think the future holds for these boots?

The boots, a pair of old tramping boots with the toes covered in mud, remained on a stool at the front of the class. The teacher also wrote on the board several words which the pupils could use in their description if they wished, such as: imbedded, river crossings, puttees, clay, bootlaces, stitching, leather, tramping. The pupils' 'boots' were collected as the bell rang for lunch.

(vi) Notetaking

Ten pupils were occasionally given the opportunity to take notes independently as part of their work for Social Studies or Science. As part of their work for a unit on Ancient Egypt, these pupils took notes from a variety of books such as encyclopedias and *The Time Traveller Book of Pharaohs and Pyramids*. A list of possible topics (e.g., buildings, clothing, gods) was pinned to the back wall of the classroom and pupils could either use these or other topics which caught their interest. The notetaking, spread over several days, was largely nondirected by the teacher.

Another piece of work requiring notetaking was an 'Animal Study'. Pupils were asked to write about an animal's life cycle:

Animal Study

Choose an animal which is not extinct. Prepare a project to cover the full life of this animal from birth to death.

Early years include:
how born
colouring
protection
food-how given things
taught by its parent and family - enemies

(vii) Captions for a picture-book

Another writing task undertaken by the pupils involved the creation of booklets on the topic of friendship. This activity was preceded by a class discussion on various aspects of friendship,

assisted by some cartoon-like pictures of Charlie Brown and Linus from a book entitled 'What Is A Friend?'. Several cartoons were discussed, such as the caption 'someone with whom you can share your dearest possessions', in order to give the pupils ideas for their own booklets. Also, the teacher read to the class a booklet compiled by a pupil from a previous year, entitled 'My Friend', and discussed some of the phrases used in it, such as 'asking after'.

Booklets consisting of eight sides of glossy white paper were then distributed to the pupils. Any one of three titles could be chosen: 'My Friend', 'What Is A Friend' and 'The Friend I Would Like To Have', and the pupils constructed a booklet using the Peanuts one as a model, i.e., using similar drawings and captions. The class worked on these booklets for an hour and, for shorter periods, over two more days.

(viii) Story on a set topic

During the course of their Social Studies unit on Ancient Egypt, the ten 'independent' pupils listened to an excerpt read by the teacher from *The Time Traveller Book of Pharaohs and Pyramids*, and were set the task of writing a story as if they were archaeologists. Although the theme of the story was prescribed in broad terms, pupils were able to choose their own title, content and presentation.

(ix) Story from pupils' own lists of topics

Pupils were also asked to choose a topic from a list of potential stories they had compiled previously, to plan the content and then to write the story. The pupils used refill paper for their first draft and folio paper for their final copy. The teacher reminded the pupils to check their drafts themselves, but also offered to provide assistance if the pupils felt that they needed some help. Apart from these comments pupils were free to write whatever they liked. (After a series of staff meetings on the 'writing process' approach, the syndicate to which this teacher belonged had decided to try out some of the approaches to writing advocated by Graves and Murray from The University of New Hampshire.)

B *Was There A Typical Week's Written Work?*

During the period observed there was no discernible weekly pattern of written work. Although language study/spelling was a relatively frequent activity, for which time was generally allotted once or twice a week, pupils were not required to do any particular type of writing, e.g., letters, poetry, reports, on a regular basis. At some time during the week, however, pupils would be working for an extended session on a Social Studies project, whether individual notetaking by the 'independent' pupils or copying notes from the blackboard for the remainder of the class. Also, writing captions for the booklet on friendship and answers to comprehension questions occurred in more than one of the weeks observed. What could loosely be called 'creative' writing was rarely required of the pupils, however.

C *Time Given to Writing Activities*

Just on the basis of the time spent in the classroom by the observer, it is difficult to establish precisely the proportion of each day given over to written work. For example, on those days when the observer was present pupils were allowed to spend, on average, about 75 minutes per day on various writing activities - from preparatory activity initiated by the teacher, such as talking about the topic set, to the actual production of text (i.e., when the pupils sat at their desks putting words down on paper).

This figure needs to be treated with caution, however. Despite the teacher's best intentions in informing the observer when pupils were most likely to be engaged in writing or closely related activities, on some days pupils carried out written work at times when the observer was not present. On other days, the observer was unable to be present at all (e.g., illness precluded three days). It is also possible that no written work was carried out whatsoever on some *non-observed* days. Thus although the average time spent on writing activities for the days *observed* may well be slightly higher than 75 minutes per day, over the whole period of the study it is likely to be considerably lower.

TABLE 1: *Time allowed for observed types of writing (Form 1)*

	WEEK					Total Minutes	%
	1	2	3	4	5		
Language Study[1]	47		55	15	35[2]	117-152	*11.8-15.4*
Copying	50		25	185[2]		75-260	*7.6-26.3*
Sentence Completion	38					38	*3.8*
Comprehension	65	55	50		65	235	*23.8*
Description		35				35	*3.5*
Notetaking[3]				125	35	160	*16.2*
Captions		108	40			148	*15.0*
Set Topic				60		60	*6.1*
Own Story				120		120	*12.1*
Total	200	198	170	320	100	988*	

[1] Observer not present for all these sessions
[2] Includes only those pupils not making their own notes
[3] 'Independent' pupils (i.e., those making their own notes)
* Out of a total of 1290 minutes observed

Depending upon which groups the pupils were in, the proportion of time spent on different writing tasks varied. Nearly one quarter of the time spent observing writing activities was taken up with pupils answering comprehension questions, and just over one quarter with writing captions for their booklets on friendship and the stories chosen from their own lists of topics. Language study and copying, however, both of which required a more constrained input from the class than other types of writing, occupied more than double the amount of time for some pupils than for others, as the independent notetakers made their own notes and wrote a story about Ancient Egypt while the rest of the class copied material into their exercise books.

D *Organizing The Class For Writing Activities*

Generally, writing activities were organized in one of three ways:

(1) Sometimes the teacher would address the whole class briefly, pointing out what the pupils were required to do, while they remained seated at their desks. This occurred, for example, when the pupils were requested to write a story from their own lists of topics.

the teaching of formal language skills than earlier in the year.

(2) Occasionally the teacher would call the whole class into the open space in the centre of the room (the desks were arranged around the perimeter of this area) and discuss with them what they were expected to do. This method was adopted when pupils were asked to complete sentences in their 'This is Me' books: an initial discussion, with the whole class seated near the teacher, was followed by pupils working individually at their desks.

(3) The usual approach was for the teacher to call one group (or various combinations of pupils) into the open space in front of the blackboard and to discuss their next task with them. In this case the teacher would often use different materials, such as reference books or school journals, with the various groups. The pupils would then be sent back to their desks to undertake the prescribed writing task(s).

E *The Teacher's Behaviour During Class Writing Activities*

More often than not the teacher would be instructing one group of pupils while the others carried on working independently. So, for example, when the independent notetakers were at work, the teacher would usually be discussing with another group or the rest of the class what their next task was to be. When the whole class was working on the same task, the teacher tended to move about the room dealing with the queries of individuals and, occasionally, stopping to praise one person's work or to show it to the whole class.

The class tended to require a reasonable amount of supervision by the teacher, apart from those occasions when the pupils were highly motivated to engage in a task (e.g., while writing their first self-chosen story). When pupils were carrying out written work, interaction between individual pupils and the teacher tended to concern either clarifying the nature of the activity set, or what the pupils had actually written. Also, supportive comments were frequently made when pupils were invited to read out their writing. Apart from telling the pupils what to do, there was a minimum of teacher control over the written product. Pupils were not asked to rewrite their work (apart from the self-chosen topic which required two drafts), and neither was it extensively corrected.

F *Teacher's Strategies for Pupils with Writing Difficulties*

Although many pupils in the class had consistent trouble with spelling or punctuation, all were capable of producing a reasonable number of words in something approaching an orderly progression of ideas. Though no special instruction was detected for individual pupils who had severe spelling problems, for example, it is important to remember that the teacher was attempting to pitch written language work at from one to three levels for any given task. This procedure absorbed a great deal of the teacher's time.

The teacher seemed to place the emotional and social development of the pupils above their 'academic' efforts and, to this end, was concerned not to draw undue attention to any work done by the pupils which contained 'mistakes' or misinterpreted the nature of a set task. Consequently, the teacher very rarely suggested to the pupils as a group that they should check their work, and avoided mentioning specific aspects of language usage which were giving pupils persistent problems. Instead, by giving some pupils different kinds of tasks to carry out, and through offering supportive comments, the teacher tried to ensure that those pupils who had persistent difficulties likely to affect their writing (such as those for whom English was a second language) were catered for and not overlooked.

In addition, at an individual level, there were few interventions while pupils were actually engaged in writing. They were generally left to themselves to produce a 'text', except that some of the pupils, for whom spelling presented problems, had their drafts corrected before the final copies were written out when undertaking the self-chosen topic task.

G *Evaluation of the Pupils' Written Work*

Much of the pupils' work, such as their booklets on friendship and their 'boots', was displayed on the walls or on a mobile display board located near the front of the classroom. Just about every available space was filled with samples of pupils' writing or artwork, including parts of the ceiling.

Generally, the teacher seemed very concerned not to make any observation or comment which could be construed as a criticism, or which in some way failed to bolster the pupil's self-image.

Consequently, most written work which required the pupils to incorporate their personal experience or their feelings was not formally marked or graded. Instead, positive or encouraging comments such as 'Thanks for being my friend' or 'I like the way you play soccer, B' were made, in this case in response to the sentences students were asked to complete in their 'This is Me' exercise books.

Major pieces of work requiring a substantial pupil input of a non-personal nature *were* graded, however. The 'Ancient Egyptians' project and the animal study received both a letter grade and a comment, but were the only tasks to be treated in this manner during the observation period.

More 'original' writing, such as the story chosen from the pupils' own lists, was often read out by the pupils and an oral evaluation made by the teacher though, again, of an encouraging, general kind rather than to do with either the content or language of their piece of writing. So, after most of the pupils had written their booklets on friendship the teacher talked about them with the class and especially praised the efforts of two pupils. When the class had completed their first self-chosen stories, all in turn were asked to read them out and, in each case, very glowing comments were made about their writing. This was the only evaluation their stories received.

Consequently, the written feedback obtained by pupils about different aspects of their writing was restricted to a relatively narrow area of written work which could be called, loosely, 'Social Studies' or 'Science'. On some occasions, however, the teacher spoke quietly to individuals while they were working, or brief conferences were held at her desk on specific aspects of their writing.

II Profiles of the Case Study Pupils

Pupil One: Adam

Regarded by his teacher as a model pupil, Adam was very diligent in class with a quiet, well-mannered approach to both teacher and fellow-pupils. He usually worked intently on the task in hand, sometimes chatting briefly to the other boys in the same group or

looking at what they were doing but not to the extent of abandoning his own work. However, he rarely participated in class discussions or oral work unless asked for a response of some kind. According to his teacher, Adam had all-round ability, i.e., was good at all subjects, and was the class's '1' (top pupil - 'each class is supposed to have a single "1" ').

Adam's exercise books were always available and maintained in a tidy fashion. He was well-organized, with ample supplies of ballpoint and coloured felt-tip pens, and on only one occasion did he slow down because he ran out of the appropriate type of paper. He worked independently with no fuss and hardly ever required any guidance from the teacher on the days observed.

Adam was probably the most copious producer of 'factual' writing in the class, and usually received the highest grade awarded for any work evaluated in this way (e.g., A^{++} for the project on Ancient Egypt). Copying out lots of material from various sources presented few problems for him. Other tasks, however, presumably of less interest to Adam, received less attention, such as the sentence completion exercise where, of all the case study pupils, he actually produced the least amount of writing. The volume of words he strung together for story tasks was about the same as the class average (i.e., about 250 words).

Adam used a variety of coloured headings, usually two lines high, and drew frames about each page of completed writing. His handwriting, while clear and easy to read, was not the neatest in the class. His letters tended to be small, though with tall vertical strokes, and he left substantial gaps between words (from about ½-1 cm) with a slight slope to the left in the formation of letters. (See the examples on the next page.) Adam was regarded as good at drawing, and usually took great pains over the presentation of diagrams and illustrations. Unlike some of the other pupils, though, Adam's two examples of stories were not accompanied by any drawings. On other occasions, his work appeared to have been produced rather hastily; his booklet on friendship, for example, had several pencilled remnants clearly visible even after it had been 'completed' (not detectable in the photocopies).

The impression of 'carelessness' is enhanced once Adam's

work is examined for the correct use of language. Although an inspection of Adam's language study exercises reveals that he had a good grasp of spelling, word meaning and sentence structure, much of his written work has clearly not been proofread. The first page of the Ancient Egypt project, for example, contained many spelling mistakes such as failing to capitalize, omitting letters or adding inappropriate ones:

The meat famous pyramids ~~piece~~ built with your eyes which were built for Egyptians kings. Six pyramids still stand or near the nile river. The pyramids were built to protect the body's of the egyptians kings. The egyptians believed in life after death, so to put the king's treasures and chariots, and other necessity's of live. Many people believe that the shape of the pyramid is a religous symbol. The sloping sides might have remined them of the sun's rays which the king would climb up to the gods. The first pyramid was built by king Zoser in the year 765 BC.

Similarly, his 'Film Review' (part of the same project) contained a large number of inaccuracies:

In the beginning Egypt was covered with forest and rain fell about every where but then it stoped and it became dry the forests died after that all men and animals were depenet on the nile for water and crops. Egypt is rich in gold and copper. The egyptians divided the first 365 Day year. The egyptian god were mainly bassed on animal because they were shown on the hyroglifics on the walls. Who napoleon invaded egypt a artish called Denon came and painted pictures of the pyramids. When champolleon started to dig for information hyroglifics were the main obstacle as they could not under stand it.

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From this point on the number of errors decreased markedly, usually to no more than four or five per page, which implies, perhaps, that Adam copied the later parts more carefully and simply failed to check the early parts at all, whether through haste, or because he tried to use more of his own words in the earlier sections.

Pupil Two: Belinda

Belinda, in some ways possibly the most industrious pupil in the class, was also very quiet and polite, and considered to be a model student. Though not a vocal pupil, Belinda was always closely involved in the classroom's activities, and enjoyed helping her immediate neighbours, either through lending them writing equipment or chatting to them about the task in hand. Unlike Adam, she tended to move about the room often, usually in search of useful materials. Regarded as '2-ish', Belinda worked very slowly and took longer than anyone else to complete tasks, particularly those entailing writing.

Belinda's books were maintained in a scrupulously tidy fashion. Although Belinda was well-organized she seemed to spend inordinate amounts of time on 'getting things right'. The early stages of each writing task were very carefully planned and her work was presented in as near perfect a state as she could possibly achieve. According to her teacher she worked at home a great deal, and her mother once asked the teacher why her daughter spent so much time on her schoolwork, especially artwork, perhaps thinking that the pupils were given far too much homework. Belinda was highly-motivated and conscientious but had trouble keeping to deadlines. She was considered capable of engaging in independent work, as, though a slow and meticulous writer, she was well able to take notes and work on her own.

The sentence completion exercises, despatched with great haste by Adam, received a considerable amount of careful attention from Belinda who wrote rather more than the other case study pupils for this task. On the other hand, her booklet on friendship contained fewer words than some of the other pupils' but outstripped the rest in neatness of presentation, and included a short text and illustrations copied from one of the Peanuts booklets used as stimulus material by the teacher. Her story 'Wait Till Midnight', however, was the same length as the class average but contained a

little appendix on 'Duties of a ghost' as a gloss to her story.

Belinda used multi-coloured headings, very neatly drawn (often with 'letraset' stencils), and sometimes drew frames about her work. Of all the pupils in the class, the formation of her handwriting was closest to the style the teacher wrote on the board some mornings for handwriting practice. Oddly enough, although Belinda consistently left about ½cm between words, when she started a new sentence the first letter was right against the fullstop in continuous writing. This 'formal' script was clearly different from her 'rough' or normal style of writing, which was more akin to printing with its variably sized letters, overwriting and crossings-out all reflecting careful editing, as in this example:

~~For~~ Silently ~~the blue~~ ~~haze~~ f vanished. We strambled out of our bags and woke Mum. Fiona told her what we had ~~she~~ seen. We went into my bedroom and sat on my bed till we heard the grandfather clock ~~strick~~ strike midnight. As we sat, the door slid open. Fiona said "I'm scared." Mum hugged her tight. Suddenly the wallpaper ripped and fell to the floor. a little trapdoor opened. Come on" I said and ~~we~~ we crawled through. Soon we found ourselves in a small room. ~~Cobwebs~~ Cobwebs hung around and ~~it smelt~~ it smelt musty. In a ~~right~~ ~~hand~~ corner, ~~we~~ Mum saw a skeleton and

Belinda also took great pains over her diagrams and illustrations, but unlike Adam would often cut out figures from comics or magazines, or even use photocopies of photographs to embellish her 'scripts'. Although these kinds of illustration predominated, Belinda also drew her own (presumably copied); her story 'Wait Till Midnight', for example, had three sketches accompanying the text. The cover of her booklet on friendship revealed the extent to which Belinda was prepared to go in the interests of presentation: it had seven pictures glued on to the cardboard cover, presumably from a Disney comic, arranged in a semi-circle

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round a multi-coloured stencilled heading, with the whole lot covered by a piece of red, transparent glossy paper attached with several staples on each side.

The effort Belinda put into her work also showed clearly in her control of the surface features of language. Apart from one or two omissions of punctuation, chiefly to do with dialogue conventions, Belinda's spelling was virtually impeccable as was her handling of syntax, even in her draft of 'Wait Till Midnight'. Belinda appeared to have internalized the fundamental conventions of written language and applied them to her writing as rigorously as she applied herself to thoughtful formats.

beautiful jewels. Mum said "we had better call the the Police. They came and took photographs and placed the bones in a plastic bag. The Police discovered that the trunk was stolen many years ago. The skeleton was a robber who had been shot by the Police. He must have died while trying to hide the trunk. For many nights afterwards we all slept with the light on.

Duties of a ghost.

1 Some ghosts return to avenge a murder and to expose the guilty villain.
2 Sometimes ghosts appear to reveal the hiding place in which they hoarded money or treasure.

Pupil Three: Craig

Craig, considered to be an 'average' pupil, on occasions vacillated between energetic labour and complete detachment from his immediate task. He seemed to be easily distracted and fooled around with his neighbours sometimes, though rarely in a very disruptive fashion, while at other times he would work diligently. According to his teacher, he 'puts his best into his work', though Craig often took several minutes to settle down to writing, as if marshalling his thoughts.

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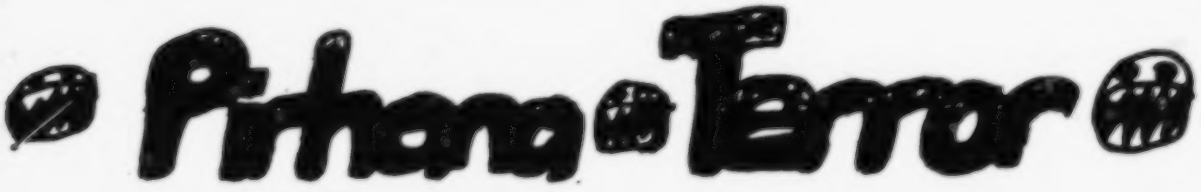
Craig had his writing equipment available at all times, and when interested in a task was capable of sustained and focussed work, such as when he was writing his stories. Craig received more teacher guidance than either Adam or Belinda, but was also a relatively quiet pupil who tended to contribute little to classroom oral work unless his comments were solicited.

Craig tended to write no more nor less than the class average. He wrote more than Adam for both the sentence completion exercise and the booklet on friendship, though considerably less than some of the other pupils. With the Ancient Egypt project Craig appeared to become restless at times, and did not complete all the diagrams the teacher put on the board, though he did copy down all the notes. (Craig was not one of the independent note-takers.) However, his story, 'Pirhana Terror' was one of the longest produced by any of the pupils at over 400 words. Here is an excerpt from this story:



My friends Gordon, Ian, Rhys, Paul, Mog, Nigle and I were swimming in a fresh water dam. We didn't know very much about it. but what ever it's histery was there was no one to be seen for miles. We felt the water it was nice and warm so I said "I'll race you in" we all liked it because it was warm. We came back and got four li lo because that is all we had. I had my own one, Gordon and Ian shared one, Mog and Nigle shared one and Rhys and Paul shared one. they were all brand new and none of them had punctures. We went

Like the other pupils Craig's written work had decorated headings (multi-coloured, and varying in line width). One original touch was to present the 'A' of 'Ancient' as a pyramid in his Ancient Egypt heading; other subheadings received little extra attention apart from being in capitals and larger than his usual script. Some of the diagrams for the Ancient Egypt project were outlines, though not all, while the booklet on friendship and the sentence completion exercises were carefully illustrated. Craig was not as keen on drawing frames around pages as some of the other pupils, restricting himself to the booklet on friendship in this respect. His handwriting was legible - more like fairly large printing with rounded letters than the tall, thin ones of Adam's - and exactly the same style and neatness whether for draft or final copies.

Craig's handling of surface features was variable. Craig made a large number of spelling mistakes and tended to run sentences together in his stories; however, when copying notes Craig rarely made mistakes in transcription, and his shorter samples, the sentence completion exercise and the booklet on friendship, contained a very small number of inaccuracies.

Pupil Four: Dennis

Dennis was regarded as a '4'. Although quite attentive when his instructional group was being addressed, Dennis was easily diverted from his work and required a reasonable amount of encouragement. If he had any difficulty, he tended to wait for the teacher to look at what he was doing which provided further opportunity to play around.

In the opinion of his teacher, Dennis lacked the fine motor skills needed to copy work accurately from the board and, compared to the other case study pupils, his printing, though legible, was not particularly tidy, as if every letter required considerable effort on his part. His script looked a little disjointed, with relatively wide gaps, often over a centimetre wide, between individual words. Also his letters were not consistent in size, which further added to the untidy appearance of his writing.

Perhaps because of the mechanical problems Dennis had with writing, he took a long time to complete writing activities, though

the final product bore little resemblance to Belinda's efforts. According to his teacher he took some evenings and part of a week-end to finish his booklet on friendship, which was a very carefully constructed piece of work with large frames on each page, Bogor-like diagrams with cartoon speech, and captions which looked somewhat neater than some of his other written work. For this exercise Dennis actually wrote more words than the other case study pupils. Both his stories, however, were among the briefest of any of the pupils' (from 100-150 words).

Dennis rarely put a lot of time into decorating his scripts though one of his stories had a brown frame, and the other a picture of a flying fox. His notes on Ancient Egypt, copied from the board, were not framed, and while many pupils tended to include diagrams and writing on the same page Dennis preferred to devote a whole page to each diagram. His headings were more erratic than the other pupils': his Ancient Egypt project did not have a title page, while his sub-headings tended to be in larger printing than his normal script rather than elaborately constructed titles such as Adam's or Belinda's.

Dennis's written work contained a large number of spelling mistakes, too, while some of the notes copied from the board contained words with missing letters or malformations (such as 'sudjeds' for subjects):

Egyptian People.

The Pharoah.

The Pharoah is the ruler of all Egypt His sudjeds believe that he is a god in the body of A man and think that he can do no wrong. He is so well thought of that people have to Kneel down before they speak to him.

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Some of Dennis's difficulties can be seen from the drafts for his stories, which were riddled with mistakes. His teacher went through them writing out the correct spelling of many words but, despite this help, Dennis still wrote out his final copy with many errors:

At A Camp.

One camp I went on. we had to go on a walk it took about 4 hours. We left The camp Site and walked up a road. moter bikes sped passed us we threw stones at them one man Staped and went mad at us. There was no bridge over the river we had to had to cary all The staff over the river to the came.
That night the river flooded and you could Not cross it.
Ther was ar Swamp around the camp to get back we had to make a flying fox across the river.
we went horse on ' guthries Buses.

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4. WRITTEN WORK IN THE FORM TWO CLASSROOM

I Writing Tasks Set

A *Activities Involving Writing*

As with the Form One class, a range of writing activities took place at the Form Two level, from noting down vocabulary to writing a story and a poem. However, the emphasis seemed to be on relatively routine tasks without a great deal of student input. The list below summarizes the different types of writing done.

WRITING OBSERVED IN THE FORM TWO CLASSROOM

(i) Language Study
(ii) Dictated Notes
(iii) Copying (e.g., drafts revised by the teacher)
(iv) Short Answers (e.g., to a comprehension exercise)
(v) Summarizing/Rewriting (e.g., from newspaper articles)
(vi) Story on Set Topic ('The Box')
(vii) Poem

It should be remembered, however, that prior to the period observed this class had just completed an intensive session, lasting several weeks, on the theme of 'Fantasy'. Consequently, till the end of the second term, there was greater emphasis on

the teaching of formal language skills than earlier in the year. The activities described here, therefore, are not necessarily typical of the year as a whole, although they do represent one 'cycle' of the teacher's language programme.

(i) Language Study

One of the most important features of this classroom was the 'daily dash', a series of language activities organised to a regular pattern and carefully supervised by the teacher. These routine spelling and vocabulary tasks took a good proportion of class time, and the pupils' efforts were marked quickly and clearly with immediate, precise feedback.

One day, for example, the pupils carried out some work on homonyms, singulars and plurals, naming the person who belongs to a particular object and apostrophes. Plenty of examples were provided, the pupils' comments were sought and the teacher gave a considerable amount of help. On another occasion practice was given on words derived from 'port' (e.g., portable, export, portrayed), a discussion on adjectives took place, and the pupils were required to add suffixes to 'sure', 'sincere' and 'safe'.

Two weeks later there was a session on common sayings: the expression 'his word is as good as his bond' was dictated to the children, who were then asked to define the saying in writing. The same procedure was adopted for 'don't throw in the sponge'. After about ten minutes on this task a session of 'revisional spelling' was conducted, with the pupils writing down over 30 words in turn accompanied by considerable prompting from the teacher.

Vocabulary extension was a frequent activity. Once, several words were listed on the board (e.g., geography, globe, world, universe, oceans, seas, atoll, territory) and their meanings discussed. One group of pupils wrote down only those words which were starred, while the remainder of the class wrote down all the words given. Later, the teacher discussed the meaning of 'root words' with the 'high' group of pupils and dictated a definition of this term to them. Then the other pupils were asked to spell the words aloud in unison. After further testing and reading the children wrote the words in their

Pupil Three: George

notebooks, followed by another round of spelling in unison. Finally the pupils ticked their notebooks.

(ii) Dictation

Apart from writing down dictated words or phrases associated with teaching points, pupils were also given extended passages to write down. Thus on one occasion notes on atlas skills were dictated to the class, while when a newspaper unit was underway further notes were given orally to the pupils. These notes were subsequently checked and corrected very promptly by the teacher who returned them the next day; on another day, a 'first copy' was dictated to the pupils and, after the dictated material was read aloud by teacher and pupils, the notes were collected in. The next day, these corrected papers were returned to the pupils who were then allowed several minutes to copy the amended notes into their exercise books.

(iii) Copying

As well as copying their own corrected work from dictation sessions, pupils occasionally copied material from the board, particularly vocabulary. During one session, for example, after a discussion of synonyms, the pupils copied a list of them into their exercise books accompanied by the teacher's comment, 'Let's see who can copy correctly from the blackboard'. And, another time, pupils were allowed ten minutes to copy a poem about a dog from the board.

The same procedure was followed with tasks where pupils had supplied their own content. 'First' or draft copies were collected by the teacher and marked before the pupils wrote the corrected versions into their exercise books (e.g., when the story 'The Box' was rewritten). As with their spelling and vocabulary activities, the teacher kept a very close eye on all aspects of the pupils' written work and continually stressed the importance of correct language usage through these intensive checking and rewriting procedures.

(iv) Short Answers

Some writing entailed the use of single words or brief phrases: for example, when pupils were requested to list the parts of a newspaper, and to answer questions about a recipe:

1. *What was the first line?*
2. *What do most people enjoy the best?*
3. *What was the word you had to do with flour?*
4. *Name all the ingredients in the recipe.*
5. *A _____ dough.*
6. *What would you cut the shapes out with?*
7. *How much butter was used in this recipe?*
8. *What kind of utensil did you have to cook in?*
9. *How long did they have to cook?*
10. *This type of writing is called creative ... descriptive ... instructional ... reporting?*

(v) Summarizing/Rewriting

While doing a unit on newspapers, the pupils were asked to choose a story from a newspaper, to 'locate the facts' and to write them up as a ½ page summary. The homework set for that evening also included writing an account of an article in the pupils' own words. The next day, the children - this time in pairs - were requested to summarise two further articles, although the teacher first provided some background information to both features. A similar exercise was carried out on another occasion, when pupils were divided into groups of three or four members and given sections of *The Dominion* to read and summarise.

(vi) Story on Set Topic: The Box

The one extended piece of creative writing done during the period observed was called 'The Box'. All pupils wrote on the same topic and the teacher provided considerable help with ideas and structure.

This task was initiated when the title of the story was given to the class and several sentences were built up orally from pupil contributions. The next day saw further preparation. After reminding the pupils about how to plan an essay, considerable emphasis was placed on a suitable beginning for the story, including reference to beginnings used in other stories. A discussion followed, centred on different types of boxes and a

whole range of possible contents (e.g., a small puppy, money, nothing, toys). Thus, apart from a set of ideas, and brief notes on the board, the pupils were provided with a clear structure to follow: a beginning (how did the box arrive?), a second paragraph (what are you going to do with the box?), and a third paragraph which had to contain an element of surprise. The pupils were then allowed about 50 minutes to write their story.

The next day some brief observations were made by the teacher on the marking of the story and, the day after, about ten minutes were taken for further comments, emphasizing punctuation. Subsequently, detailed reporting back occurred when points were awarded to the best stories, some pupils were invited to read out their story and appreciative comments were made by the teacher. Finally, accompanied by additional positive comments, the other pupils' drafts were distributed and the whole class wrote out their now corrected stories into their exercise books.

(vii) Poem

The pupils also wrote one poem of their own, about a mouse. Again, the teacher provided considerable help in both the pre-writing and correcting stages. Before the pupils began writing, a live mouse was passed around the class and silently observed by the pupils. The teacher then discussed appropriate vocabulary and ideas with them, listing their contributions on the board, giving a positive response for evocative language, accepting less imaginative offerings quietly and adding individual words and new expressions to the children's suggestions. Consequently, the pupils had a large store of phrases available to them before they began composing their poem, for which about 20 minutes was allowed, while taped music was played in the background.

The next day, the teacher commented on the marking of the poem and three poems were read out. Two days later more poems were read to the class and further comments were made.

B *Was There A Typical Week's Written Work?*

While the timetable ensured that the language programme was followed at set times during the week, daily practice meant that the types of writing receiving most attention on a weekly basis, apart from those associated with language study (e.g., correct forms of words, definitions) - which received considerable emphasis in nearly all such sessions - were copying or rewriting (e.g., summarising) of some kind. 'Creative' writing received much less attention but still followed the draft/mark/copy/mark/return pattern, continuing the daily focus on corrected products which was consistently followed over the whole period of observations; these 'creative' tasks, however, were not carried out on a weekly basis.

C *Time Given to Writing Activities*

Again, it is difficult to assign a figure to each day which denotes the precise amount of time in class given to writing (i.e., from discussing the task with the pupils to the actual production of text). For the 17 days on which the observer was present, however, about 845 minutes involved either writing or related preparatory activities, making an average of about 47 minutes a day. This could be a slight under-estimate, given that additional writing activities may well have taken place on those days when the observer was not present, despite attempts to allow for such a contingency.

TABLE 2: *Time allowed for observed types of writing (Form 2)*

	WEEK					Total Minutes	%
	1	2	3	4	5		
Language Study	69	39	64	10	51	233	*27.6*
Dictation	37	-	-	30	-	67	*7.9*
Copying	66	20	111	-	47	244	*28.9*
Short Answers	-	39	-	-	-	39	*4.6*
Summarising	-	56	82	-	-	138	*16.3*
Story	-	82	-	-	-	82	*9.7*
Poem	-	38	-	-	-	38	*4.5*
Total	172	274	257	40	98	845*	

* Out of a total of 1980 minutes observed

Apart from the language study activities, which rarely entailed writing longer than a sentence, the dominant type was copying, followed by summarising (i.e., those tasks associated with the analysis of articles from the newspaper). Dictation took up about 8 percent of the time allowed for writing. The two 'creative' writing tasks when combined took about 14 percent of the class time, which possibly indicates just how much time is necessary for the completion of 'original' writing, as only two tasks were involved.

D *Organizing the Class for Writing Activities*

For almost all written work the children worked at their own desks, arranged in an open 'U' formation. Although the pupils usually commenced the same tasks together, finishing times were more variable; writing was often continued by some pupils while others were engaged in listening to the teacher or reading. Sometimes the class was split into two groups, the 'top' pupils and the rest. Less often, groups of pupils were organized for discussions, when the landings might be used as well as the classroom spaces.

E *The Teacher's Behaviour During Class Writing Activities*

Generally, the teacher interacted with all or some of the pupils, though she retired occasionally to her desk, either to work alone or to withdraw individual pupils to work beside her. Most preparation and marking, however, were done outside school hours.

Irrespective of the nature of the written work pupils were engaged in, teacher input was significant. Tasks were clearly defined, and pupils were given opportunities to make their own suggestions which were repeated by the teacher, often changed and sometimes written on the blackboard. The 'creative' writing tasks were started only after lengthy discussion and careful outlining by the teacher, and much of the writing done was in response to the teacher's dictation or correction of drafts. The teacher's control of all stages of writing in this class was, therefore, considerable.

Sometimes, while the class was writing, the teacher would interrupt the pupils in order to praise an individual, or to read out an extract, or to remind the class of the task they were

engaged in. Positive reinforcement was always provided by the teacher, who frequently circulated about the room making encouraging comments. Off-task behaviour was quickly dealt with.

F *Teacher's Strategies for Pupils with Writing Difficulties*

A great deal of emphasis was placed on the 'right' form of language in this class, as pupils' written work was always checked by the teacher. Because of the teacher's practice of correcting drafts, at the very least those pupils experiencing language difficulties were provided with a more correct language model to follow when rewriting their drafts.

That different standards were expected from different children is revealed by two practices: pupils in the 'low' group were given fewer words to learn, or different language study activities, and for some pupils a follow-up procedure was adopted. For example, with the 'daily dash', some children were put on a list to see the teacher later so that the points which were giving them difficulty could be reviewed. Similarly, after the story topic, 'The Box', had been introduced, pupils who were bereft of ideas received further coaxing and assistance at the teacher's desk. And when the class was doing the newspaper unit (summarizing articles) children were paired in such a way that weaker writers could obtain some help from more competent ones, in addition to individual assistance for those who needed it.

G *Evaluation of the Pupils' Written Work*

All work in this class was carefully checked by the teacher. Anything which might be seen - including dictated notes - first needed a draft which the teacher corrected before it was re-written. The 'fair' copy, incorporating the changes suggested by the teacher, was also marked. These second copies were often profusely decorated by the pupils as lettering, illustration and display received a great deal of emphasis.

The 'daily dash' was often corrected in a group (though with a little cheating); anything else was clearly marked by the teacher, usually with several positive comments and with almost all errors corrected. Although the 'daily dash' received a percentage mark, extended writing, whether factual or personal, was not graded by letters or numerals. Instead, stars were

awarded to the best pieces of writing and, once an appropriate number of stars had been accumulated, a small prize was given to the pupil concerned.

After each major task the teacher 'reported back' to the class, reading out the best attempts. Teacher comment and feedback, in general, were very positive and much of the pupils' writing was displayed on the classroom walls. However, the major emphasis in this teacher's approach was on the right form of language: correct usage was considered to be the ultimate goal for all pupils.

II Profiles of the Case Study Pupils

Pupil One: Erin

This girl was considered to be very bright by her teachers, 'the sort of girl that makes a Rhodes scholar', and to have considerable ability in writing. She usually provided what was asked for to a high standard, but also carried out more individual work than most children in the class. In the opinion of her teacher she was 'outstanding in every area of the school curriculum'.

Erin occasionally rebelled, however. She freely admitted using the teacher to proof and correct her work in order to save effort (e.g., 'I usually leave it up to her to do the punctuation'), and had little interest in 'second' or final copies. Her drafts were usually immaculate (except when she lost interest), with illustrations and much use of correcting fluid.

Here is a sample of her 'daily dash':

"Daily Dash"

20th July '83

a)
1 male, mail — steak, stake
2 loan, lone — principal, principle
3 ceiling, sealing — profit, prophet
4 desert, dessert — stationary, stationery
5 board, horde ✓ — lightening, lightning ✓

B)
1 wolf, wolves — potato, potatoes
2 shelf, shelves — tomato, tomatoes
3 thief, thieves — volcano, volcanoes
4 chief, chiefs ✓ — echo, echoes
5 handkerchief, handkerchiefs — piano, pianos ✓

C)
1 rifle - infantry (army) ✓
2 prescription - chemist ✓
3 pulpit - preacher ✓
4 joy-stick - pilot ✓
5 spectacles - optician ✓
6 cartography - map-maker (cartographer) ✓
7 cooking - chef ✓
8 plays - playwright ✓
9 microscope - scientist, physicist ✓
10 stethoscope - doctor ✓

EXCELLENT

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tasks, the teacher promised

And from her notes on the atlas:

The Atlas — 19th July 8.

A collection of maps bound like a book is always called an atlas. Atlas gets its name because of a legendary hero from Greece, who was said to support the heavens on his shoulders. Very early maps had to be copied by hand, but when printing was invented, maps of all shapes and sizes appeared in great numbers.

An atlas does not correctly show the land and sea masses in perspective. It only gives us a basic position of countries and oceans in the world. You need longitudinal gores to correctly represent land and water. As a matter of fact, in the olden days, many ships and seafaring vessels lost their way, and drifted off course, and were lost forever at sea! Since then, navigators invented a method, whereby the world was divided into twelve gores, which correctly spread the earth out, laying it flat, yet still in position with the compass point.

Splendid

She contributed a great deal to classroom discussion and willingly offered ideas for writing tasks. Many of her ideas were adopted by other children. Erin wrote at home for her own purposes but saw little merit in publishing her work:

> *Sometimes when I think about a poem I write it down. Like I've done one before, 'The Old Woman Under the Hill'. Sometimes when I get a good story thing I write down the ideas of the story but I never seem to*

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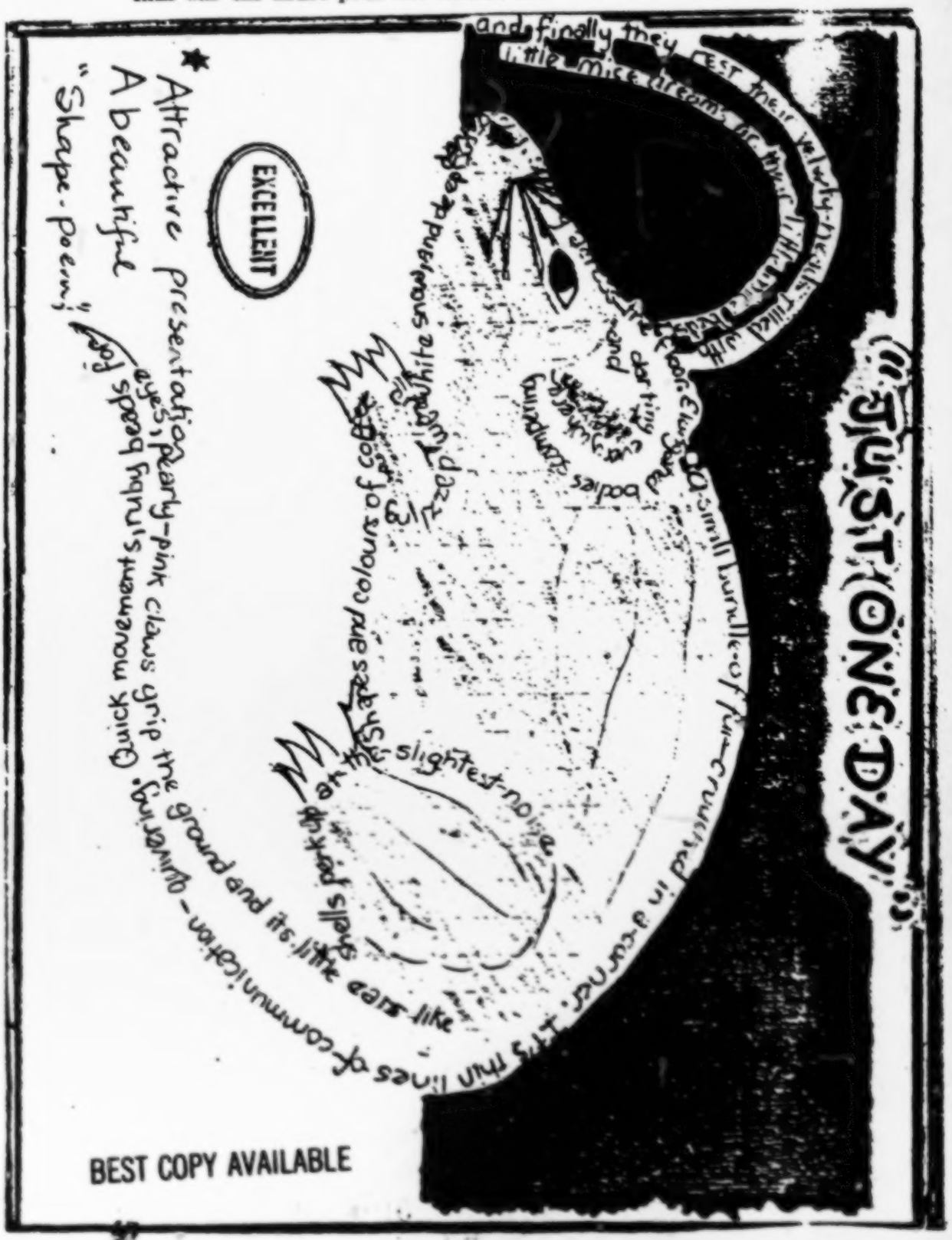
get around to writing the actual story. I've got tons of ideas whizzing around my head for a book, but I never have the time .... I'll show the teacher a poem - it really depends what I think of it. If I think it's trash I usually stuff it away in my drawer or something like that.

This was the mouse poem she handed in:



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Over a period of three to four weeks, Erin also completed a project of her own on the Renaissance, although the topic was suggested by the teacher. The content originated from a book she had received as a prize for accumulating 150 stars.

Pupil Two: Frank

This pupil was considered to be a conformist doing 'very commendable work' who socialised extremely well with his peers and was keen to please. He was very orthodox, writing exactly what was required. His conscientious approach is illustrated by his behaviour when the pupils were working on the newspaper articles; Frank withdrew from his partner's off-task behaviour and carried on working by himself. He started most tasks immediately with a minimum of fuss.

Frank was considered to be very meticulous in his written work, with an almost finicky sense of detail. His work was not as error-free or quite as tidily presented as Erin's although, in his own words, he checked his written work 'to make sure that there are not too many mistakes'. Here are some of his notes on the atlas, for example, with three incorrectly spelt words written at the bottom in triplicate:

An 'Atlas' does not correctly represent the land and sea masses in perspective. It only gives us a basic position of countries and oceans in the world. You need longitudinal zones to correctly represent land and water. As a matter of fact, in the olden days, many ships and sea-faring vessels lost their way, and drifted off course, and were lost forever at sea! Since then navigators invented a method, whereby the world was divided in to twelve gores, which correctly spread the earth out, laying it flat, yet still in position with the compass point.

position perspective longitudinal
position perspective longitudinal
position perspective longitudinal

Well done. Ja

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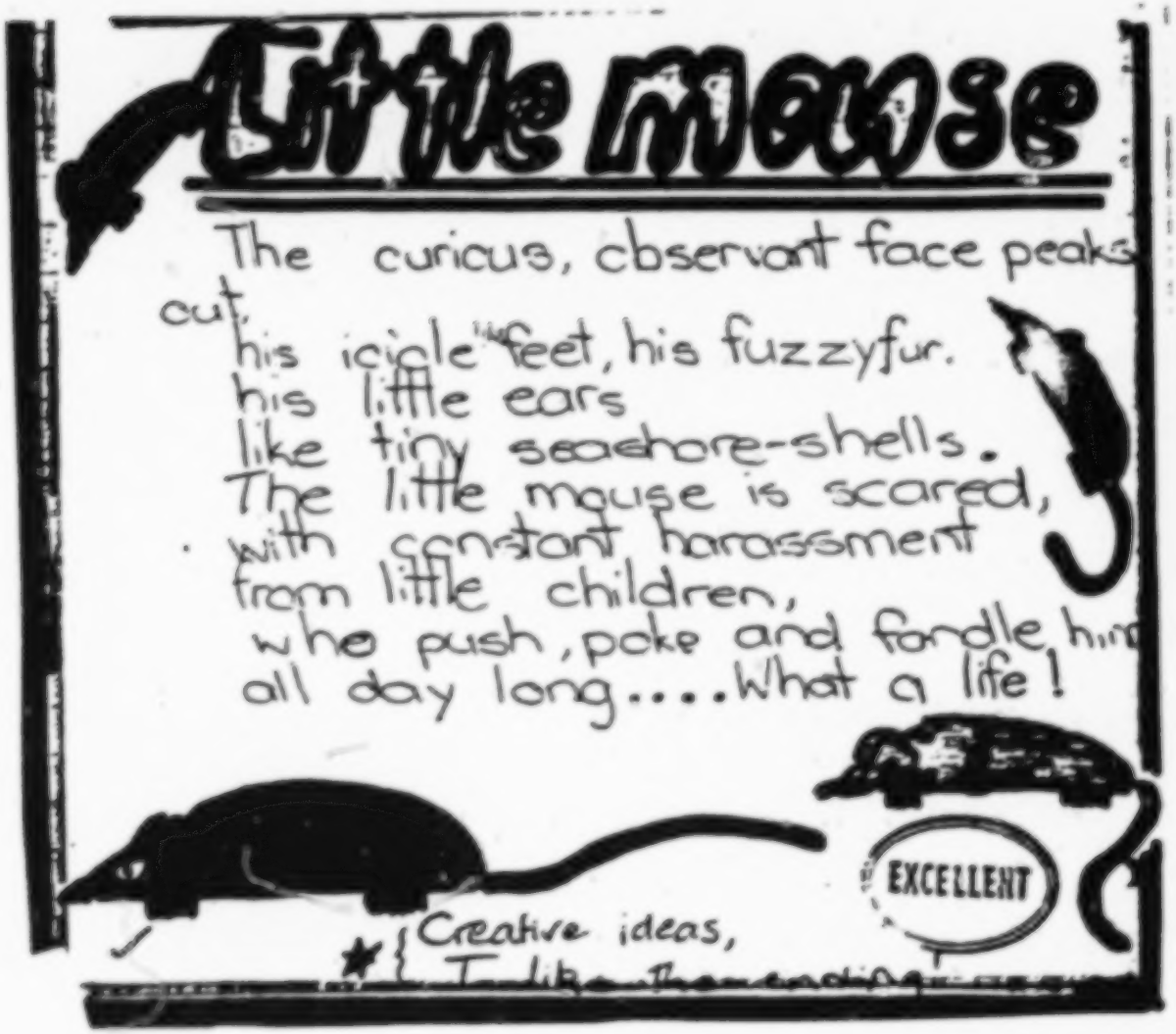
When writing the 'Little Mouse' poem Frank changed the title: it had originally been 'The Little Mouse' but the teacher suggested omitting the definite article, which Frank accepted. He was of the view that no advantage would accrue from writing an amended second copy, however, 'because if I change something it might make it worse'. Here is his mouse poem in its 'final' version:



Notice the illustrations, the positive comments, the 'excellent' stamp, the large heading and framework.

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Pupil Three: George

George was torn between pleasing the teacher and carrying out work which was satisfying to himself. Although he tended to show off, George's general knowledge was broad. He was considered to be a 'free thinker' who required gentle persuasion to undertake some of the written tasks set. His home life was difficult and he was regarded as maladjusted and low in self-esteem.

George had difficulties with spelling, grammar and handwriting. However, he was keen to change drafts and to develop his ideas. He was impatient with repetitive work, such as language exercises and dictation, though he verbalized their importance. He often destroyed drafts after the teacher had marked them as he preferred to avoid copying or to produce a totally new draft, a behaviour which seemed to disconcert his teacher: 'He says he can't be bothered writing in the second copy correctly ... invariably there will be at least one paragraph changed'. George explained why he might make changes after his first copy was written: 'I read it out to myself to see if it makes sense. I check it a lot, and if it doesn't make sense I'll change it or add something'.

He was regarded as possibly the most original writer in the class, despite his problems with the mechanical aspects of language use and admitted that he particularly enjoyed writing stories about pets.

Here is George's story, 'The Box':

* Another outstanding story. I really enjoyed reading. What an imagination you have, & creative mind! (Just watch your spelling!)

July 22th

"The Box"

It was a cold day. I had just come home from school when I p/ saw ~~It~~ A large grey box out on our front lawn. It looked as if it was made out of some synthetic metal. It wasn't shaped like a box, it was round more like a sphere. I didn't know what it was, but from its size, I presumed it would be heavy!... I wrapped my arms around it and gave a sharp tug. Instead of sp/ the heavy weight I expected, I almost threw it over my shoulder - it was so light! (A seven - year - old could lift it with ease!) I carried it up to my house, and set it down in the lounge. I got a ladder, so I could get on top

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of it. On its top-side, there was a hatch, (rather like a submarine — rather.) I attempted to open it, but when I touched it, I got a sharp, electric shock! About three seconds later, the hatch went slowly up. I climbed adventurously down into the box; then immediately a blue light went on, and I saw a myriad of dials, switches, and circuit-boards. I recognised the radar-equipment, and several other instruments, but the rest completely baffled me! Then, I typed in to the computer what I guessed would be the entry-code and requested plans and information. As it turned out, this "box" was a research unit, belonging to the "M.O.D." (Ministry of Defence.) In the box was a "hot line" to the Chief of defence.* I managed to cut through all the red tape, and returned it to the minister. Nine weeks later, a package arrived. I opened it, in it was a small reward! (I guess it was my reward!)

*Now p.

finish this like some mini adventure

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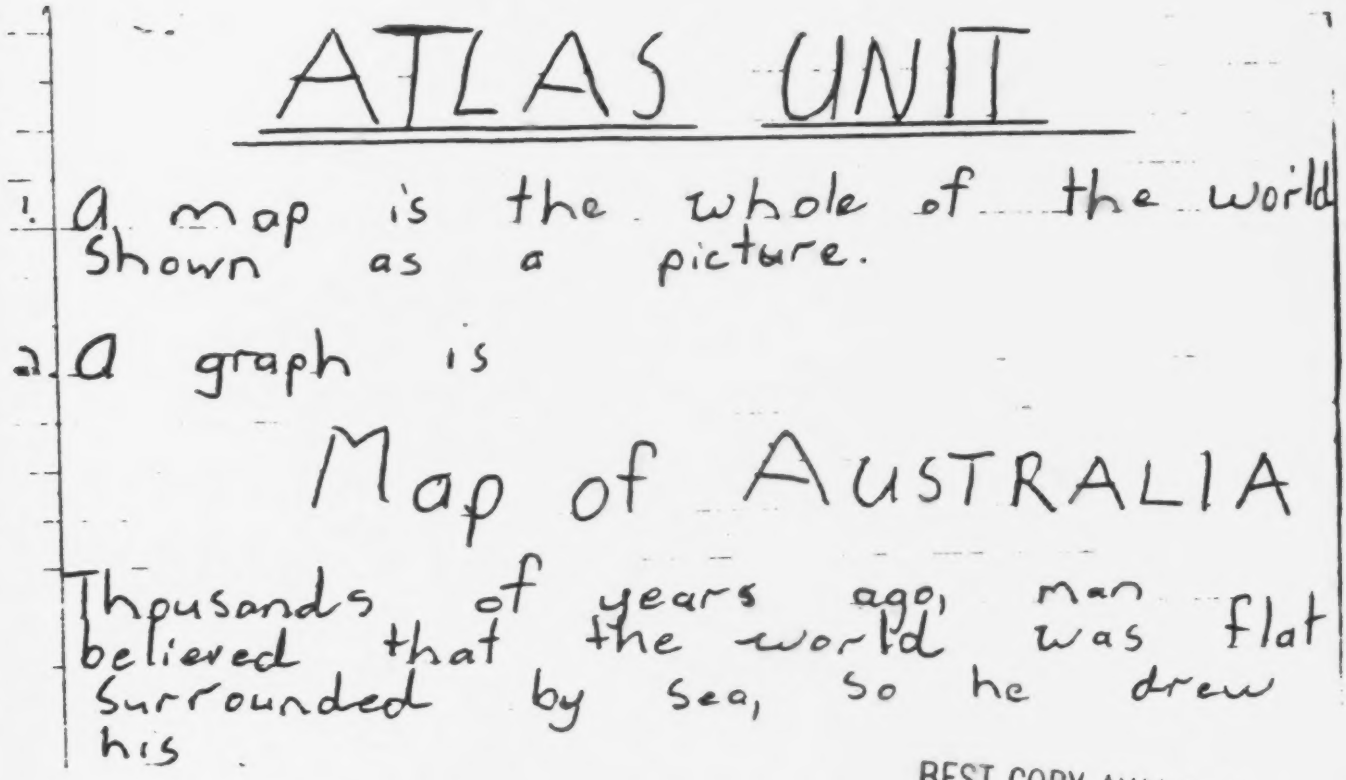
Pupil Four: Harry

Regarded as 'a group in one boy', Harry's language skills were very limited. He attended remedial reading classes and was often provided with separate programmes of work. Conscious of his limitations, which he infrequently tried to overcome, Harry admitted: 'I don't like school much really. I just like reading war comics the most'. Harry was sometimes disruptive, and more concerned with staying out of sight than carrying out language activities.

Harry was reliant on 'buddies', especially George, an approach which was actively encouraged by his teacher. Harry said, for example, 'the words I don't know how to spell I just get Harry or Pat to help me' and he frequently borrowed his friends' books to copy out work. Once he spent an entire day writing six sentences to use spelling words (two of them inappropriately).

Harry's writing was generally very ordinary. His final copies still had large numbers of mistakes, though words copied from the blackboard were usually spelt correctly. By his own estimation, Harry could not 'spell really that good', nor could he keep up with work such as dictation: 'I don't do most of that stuff because it is really hard to keep up'. Here is an excerpt from his atlas notes:



ATLAS UNIT

1. a map is the whole of the world shown as a picture.

2. a graph is

Map of AUSTRALIA

Thousands of years ago, man believed that the world was flat surrounded by sea, so he drew his

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He did not do any writing outside school and, questioned about his main concern when writing, stated: 'All I really worry about is that I want to get a page over and done with'. When writing the mouse poem his phrases were taken from the blackboard and totalled only 16 words:

Mice

a mice has eyes, that
reminds of my pearls
and his fur reminds me
ice cream.

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5. WRITING ACTIVITIES AT THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL: AN INTERPRETATION

I Teaching Writing

Both teachers ensured that their pupils were provided with a highly supportive environment for all classroom activities, including writing. The classrooms themselves were physically attractive. The Form One teacher, for example, considered that her classroom on the first floor of a two story block was ideally situated for stimulating some kinds of written work as it overlooked a bay surrounded by hills where interesting events frequently took place, such as dredges, yachts or aeroplanes passing by. And, inside the room, almost all the available space, including the ceiling,was taken up by displays of eye-catching material (nearly all pupils' work) which were occasionally changed.

It was the same in the Form Two classroom, which also overlooked the bay, as these comments from the teacher indicate:

> *Displays of work are constantly up in my classroom. I'm even going up on to the ceiling now with the totem-poles of the Red Indians but the children love it ... . There are displays on creative writing, Social Studies, Science, Art, poetry constantly up and very colourful - anything that will give the children a colourful environment ... . Boxes of items are on display at the back of the room and there's a coaster thing that rolls about the class. I did a big newspaper unit display on it but now we have a display on the Eskimos with art and creative writing, myths and legends.*

Each teacher had a helpful and warm manner which encouraged pupils in their written work as in all other language activities. When new tasks were initiated, pupils' comments were carefully considered, and the tasks were explained in sufficient detail to ensure that pupils had a clear idea of what they were supposed to do. Extra help was willingly given to those pupils who sought it, and once writing tasks were completed both teachers provided oral feedback in a pleasant way and emphasized the positive aspects of the pupils' writing in their written comments. The pupils were never made to feel insecure about their writing or their ability to carry out written work.

Over the month, a relatively wide variety of tasks was carried out in both classrooms. In terms of length, the whole range from single words, as was required with some of the language study exercises, to pieces of writing of more than a page, such as the 'imaginative' stories, was covered. However, in the Form One class, most written work consisted of single sentences or paragraphs (e.g., answers to comprehension questions, copied notes and the sequences put together in the booklet on friendship) and, in the Form Two class, paragraph-length pieces such as dictated notes and summaries, together with their rewritten versions. Pupils in the Form One class wrote more 'personal' pieces than those in the Form Two class, although a mixture of descriptive/factual writing (usually copied) and more imaginative pieces (e.g., the stories) was set in both classes.

In the Form One class, though, pupils were either more or less exposed to some kinds of writing depending upon the group they were in. Pupils in the 'top' group were given more autonomy than the rest of the class, especially with 'factual' writing, because they were considered capable of making notes without supervision. Consequently, these pupils were given opportunities with some tasks, which the remainder of the class did not have, to decide upon their own content, presentation and amount of writing, especially when 'Social Studies' or 'Science' projects were set. On the whole, therefore, the rest of the class carried out a greater number of more routine, mechanical tasks requiring much less of the pupils' own input.

In the Form Two class, pupils who had accumulated enough 'stars' were given the opportunity to compile their own projects, such as Erin's on the Renaissance. Over the month observed, however, the emphasis was on routine, mechanical tasks such as copying, dictation,

and rewriting which the whole class was required to carry out. Together, these tasks took up a greater proportion of the class time given to written work than any other type of writing.

There appeared to be comparatively little time allowed for 'creative' or 'imaginative' writing, when compared with the time given to other kinds of tasks, in both the Form One and Two classes (about 15 percent at each level if sustained writing only is included). In the Form One class, for example, although the pupils were given an opportunity to write a description of a boot, and could provide their own ideas, most pupils simply answered a set of questions put on the blackboard by the teacher. Pupils were able to give full reign to their 'own' ideas with the two stories they wrote chosen from their own topics but many of the themes were clearly derived from books or television with titles such as 'The Spider in My Desk', 'Dissecting Humans', 'Trapped In an Underwater Cave' and 'The Death Lagoon'.

Similarly, in the Form Two class, the pupils were allowed to work on two 'creative' tasks, i.e., a story and a poem, but in both cases there was considerable teacher input, right from the choice of topic, through the teacher's revisions of the first draft to the marking of the final copy. Yet, although the number of 'imaginative' tasks completed by all the pupils was the same in each class (with the exception of the 'top' group in the Form One class who were able to write a third story as part of their Ancient Egypt project), the teachers differed in how they set and evaluated tasks involving writing.

Perhaps the most significant difference between the two intermediate level teachers, in their handling of writing activities, lay in the degree of autonomy they allowed their pupils over both the writing process and the written product. The Form One teacher, who exercised relatively little control over the content of some of the writing tasks the pupils were asked to carry out, tended towards one extreme, while the Form Two teacher, who carefully checked all phases of her pupils' written work, tended towards another extreme.

One of the central concerns of the Form One teacher, for example, was to encourage the personal development of her pupils, i.e., to facilitate their social and emotional growth, as well as to extend them academically. As a result, some of the writing tasks her pupils carried out involved 'values clarification exercises' in which the pupils wrote about their personal feelings. Apart from setting these

tasks, the teacher exercised no apparent control over the pupils' input and, once the writing had been finished, through deliberate choice made no corrections or revisions when evaluating it. What the pupils wrote, it seemed, was regarded as their own property; the teacher did not want to intervene at any point after writing had begun in what amounted to a form of self-disclosure, apart from making positive, non-critical responses.

Similarly, with the more extended types of writing, such as the notes some pupils made independently for 'Social Studies', the teacher again exercised very little control over the pupils' input. Students could also determine their own pace of work as such projects often took several days to complete. And once their projects had been finished, very few mistakes made by the pupils (particularly Adam) were corrected, even though most of what they had written was taken verbatim from various books, and in Adam's case there were great disparities from page to page in the number of errors made. Also, those pupils who copied notes from the board rarely had their errors corrected.

With the 'imaginative' writing tasks, towards the end of the period observed, pupils were allowed to make their own lists of topics to write about. There appeared to be no difficulty attached to this procedure. As a result, teacher control over these tasks was restricted to the announcement that it was time to write a story. All the pupils in the class wrote drafts first, except for one girl, which were then revised by the pupils themselves, apart from those pupils experiencing severe writing difficulties. Dennis, for example, received some assistance from the teacher with his first draft. The pupils' stories were not formally assessed, and the teacher did not attempt to correct the pupils' errors because of the degree to which the task allowed pupils to incorporate their own perspectives, feelings and ideas.

The Form Two teacher followed a somewhat different approach. With the exception of personal projects and theme studies, which pupils carried out with little supervision, all stages of the writing process were closely directed. When pupils began a writing task, 'stimulation' periods usually involved the teacher making suggestions, adapting the children's suggestions or adding to them. And while the children were actually writing the teacher would sometimes make further observations and suggestions in order to provide additional ideas. Drafts were

corrected by the teacher, with nearly all the errors pointed out, and the final copy was also marked. Considerable emphasis, therefore, was placed on the pupils' written products. These were expected to be carefully presented and accurate in grammar and spelling. Deletions or additions were not encouraged once the first draft was complete, unless these had been suggested by the teacher; then the pupils would normally incorporate them in their final draft, except George, who tended to be more independent.

In both classes, there was usually little time for pupils to think about their writing. Frank, for example, as did several other children, commented that he would prefer to have more time to prepare for writing:

Fr: *If we are told we have got to write a story with a surprise ending, straightaway, in no time at all, then it's tricky.*

Obs: *How much time do you like between being told your topic and starting to write?*

Fr: *Oh, about a night to think it over.*

The usual model, however, was for pupils to be told about a writing task, to be motivated in some way (mainly involving teacher/pupil discussion, although pupil/pupil interaction occurred relatively frequently in the Form One classroom) and then to be allowed a set period of time to complete it.

In the Form One class the goal for much of the written work seemed to be to build the pupils' confidence, or to provide the pupils with an opportunity to extend their knowledge of a particular topic. With one of the 'imaginative' stories, for example, all pupils were invited to read out what they had written to the rest of the class, a task which no pupil declined, while the teacher made encouraging comments about each story (e.g., 'that was a creative story', 'I enjoyed listening to that', 'that was a very good story'). And occasionally, pupils' work was displayed in the classroom. Encouraging the pupils to 'feel good' was the most important goal of writing in this classroom. As a consequence, perhaps, very little attention was paid to the skills of checking or revising written work until the Graves-like approach was tried out near the end of the term. It is quite possible, of course, that the class had been informed earlier in the year of the importance of proofreading their writing before handing it in and that pupils' attention was not drawn repeatedly to this skill for that reason.

In the Form Two class the goal for most written work during the period observed appeared to be the production of a 'text' which would meet the teacher's standards of accurate language usage. This was reinforced by the practice of copying out corrected pieces of writing and the public praise of selected efforts, according to the principle that the 'best' writing deserved the most attention. Consequently, writing was often displayed in the classroom or syndicate area. Pupils were continually made aware of the need to follow correct language conventions, especially since each piece of writing they completed was marked on two separate occasions. Evaluation of the pupils' written work, therefore, was a significant aspect of the Form Two teacher's approach to writing activities.

II The Pupils' Approaches to Written Work

As one would expect, there were wide differences among the pupils in the way they tackled tasks involving writing. Some of these differences have already been illustrated by the accounts of the case study pupils given elsewhere in this report, and include such features as the amount written for the same task, the accuracy of the language used, the extent to which they discussed their writing with the teacher or other pupils, the attention given to presentation, especially decoration, and the time taken to initiate and complete writing tasks. In addition, a small group of pupils in each class regularly encountered difficulties with various aspects of writing which posed few, if any, problems for other pupils.

Perhaps the characteristic which more pupils shared than any other was the emphasis nearly all of them placed on presentation, especially decoration on pages with writing. A great deal of time and energy was used in 'illuminating' their pages, either before, during or after they had finished their 'texts'. Thus coloured frames were ruled around the outside edges of pages, titles were often very elaborate with large, multicoloured capital letters, while carefully drawn sketches and other illustrations accompanied the words. Few pupils were without 'felts' (i.e., felt-tip pens) and assorted coloured ballpoints, and those who had particularly good supplies usually found their pens in great demand. Often there was a lot of activity before writing commenced as pupils sorted out their writing equipment.

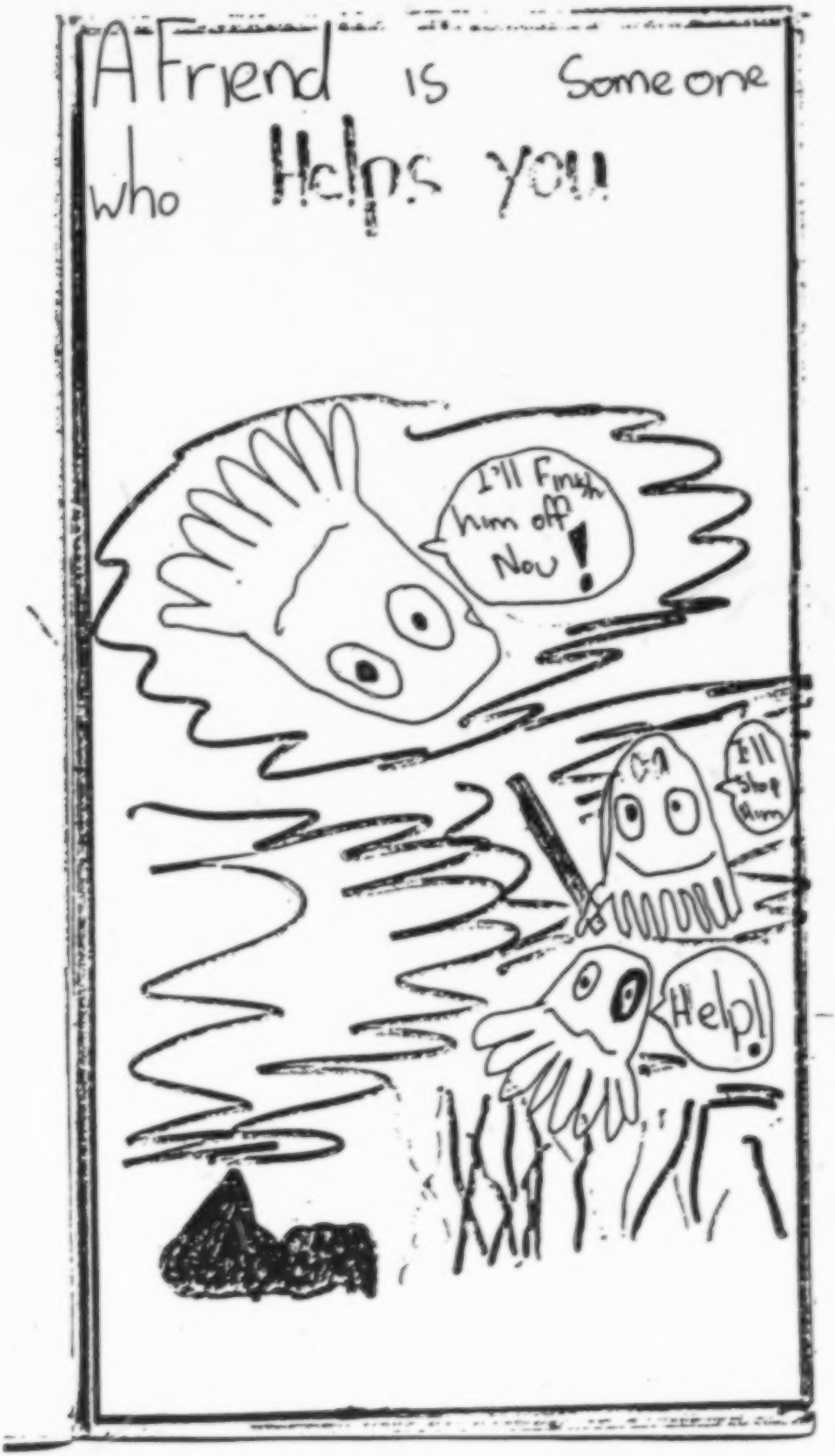
Correcting fluid was also used very liberally by many pupils.

Some were more enthusiastic about presentation than others; at one extreme was Belinda who put vast amounts of effort into all phases of her written work, especially decoration and handwriting, and often attached magazine photographs or cartoon characters from comics to her pages of writing. Similarly, Erin had a neat script and with her mouse poem wrote the words in the shape of a mouse, used several colours for the frame and title and enclosed the heading with quotation marks. Nevertheless, nearly all the pupils observed seemed to attach great importance to artwork as an accompaniment to their writing.

To illustrate this tendency, here is an account of how some of the Form One pupils went about compiling their booklet on friendship. This task provided pupils with considerable scope for drawing their own illustrations and creating a text based on their own experiences. The amount of writing involved was relatively small, ranging from 54 to 168 words for the case study pupils (oddly enough, Adam wrote the least while Dennis wrote the most for this exercise). The observations recounted here relate to the same 50-minute session just before noon.

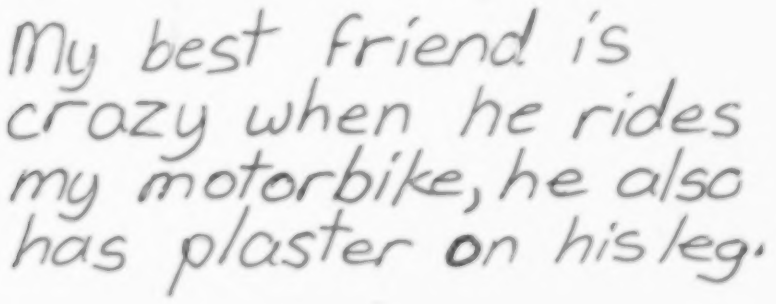
Adam, always relatively productive, spent most of his time doing artwork for this task. In this session he managed to colour in the heading to his booklet, WHAT IS A FRIEND (without a question mark), with the first 3 words in blue, and the fourth in orange, to draw orange borders around a page, to spend about 10 minutes drawing two little octopus-like figures on the cover, to draw several lines on an inside page and to colour in another drawing. He also wrote 15 words: 'A Friend is Some who Cares for You' and 'A Friend is someone who Helps you', with the words after 'who' in each case coloured with felt-tip pens. In addition, he looked at the efforts of at least two of his neighbours (though with a wide interval between these 'inspections') and, briefly, listened to one of them talking.

A Friend is Someone who Helps you



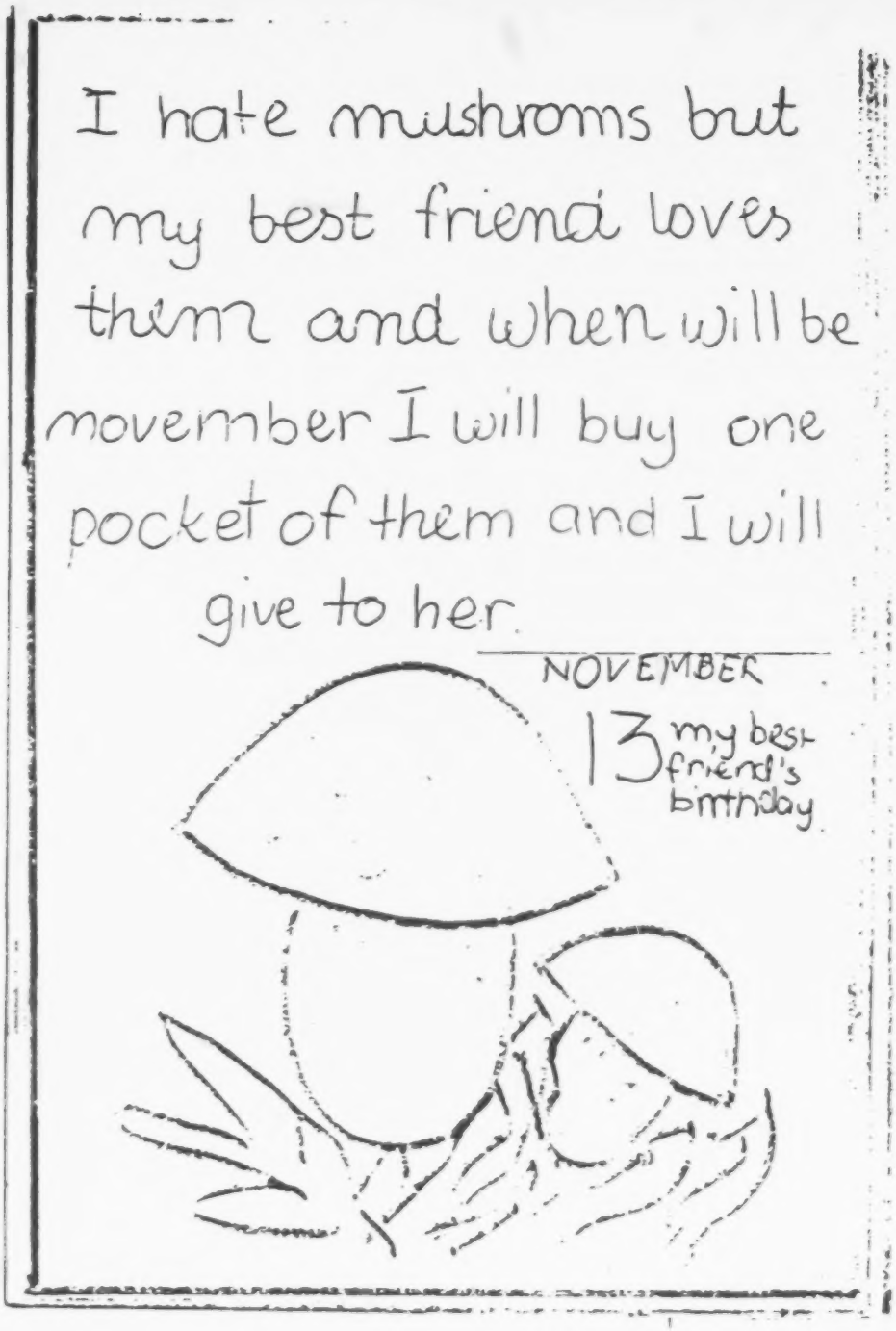
Belinda, meanwhile, spent the entire time attending to the appearance of her booklet. At first, she chatted briefly to the teacher and wandered over to some other pupils (an action repeated twice before the bell rang for lunch), then took nearly quarter of an hour to draw some borders and to colour them in. The rest of the session was filled with various tasks such as looking at a label inside her desk, drawing some lines on a piece of paper, cutting up a label and looking inside an exercise book for a drawing of a person. No words were written at all in this 50-minute session.

Craig, however, was not quite so preoccupied. He spent the first 10 minutes looking about, tapping his pen on the desk and not working at all. After quarter of an hour he brought a lined sheet to his desk and started decorating the edge of the page; this took him several minutes. For the next 10 minutes he drew a circle with a pair of compasses, looked dreamily about the room, talked to a neighbour and played with a rubber on his chair. By this time the teacher was standing nearby and he became rather more diligent. In the 25 minutes before the bell rang, he wrote four lines of text, originally in pencil, then in ballpoint:



Dennis was absent.

One of the most productive pupils of all (not one of the case study pupils), after a few minutes, had already pencilled in a picture and some words which the teacher read out to the whole class. After quarter of an hour she had finished her cover in two tones of blue, and taken it to the teacher for her to examine. After half an hour she had written several lines inside her booklet, followed by 10 minutes on a drawing, with more text and another drawing partially completed when the bell rang.


I hate mushrooms but my best friend loves them and when will be november I will buy one pocket of them and I will give to her.
NOVEMBER
13 my best friend's birthday

Another pupil, meanwhile, in the 50 minutes available, completed his cover and rapidly produced five pages with text and illustrations in a range of colours on all of them. Most others had tackled their covers,

focussing on their titles, and were still either writing up or illustrating their first page. Clearly, most of the pupils were more concerned with how to present their booklet on friendship than with the actual words they were going to include in it.

This emphasis on the appearance of the whole page, writing and decoration together, was probably encouraged by the teachers themselves, who also placed considerable stress on presentation. According to the Form Two teacher, for example:

> *The papers go back to the children. They will rewrite them in their very best handwriting. I don't think that is too much to ask because I think children take a great pride in their presentation, especially in this class. I give them little stars and they count their points but they actually write it (i.e., the final copy) in their best handwriting or printing. I give them a choice and they decorate within it or around it or they do a picture under it. They illustrate the title ... they present it in a frame. Some of them are now using combinations of three colours in their frame which they have already introduced into the title and into their drawing.*

The Form One teacher occasionally held up samples of pupils' work in order to comment on how well-drawn they were, such as the booklet on friendship with a blue cover. One of the few comments on Craig's Ancient Egypt project was 'an excellent title page', and Adam's notes on the same topic had 'your artwork is very clear and precise', in addition to other remarks; such endorsements reinforced the pupils' practice of spending a reasonable amount of time over the illustrations accompanying factual pieces. But it did not stop there; even the 'imaginative' tasks for some pupils were viewed as an opportunity for decoration, with frames drawn around the pages and occasional diagrams and elaborate headings accompanying the stories.

Although pupils varied according to how much effort they put into the appearance of their written work, the 'illumination of scripts' was an almost universal concern. Somewhat wider variations could be detected, however, with other aspects of their writing. Firstly, some pupils were able to produce many more words over a particular period of time than were other pupils. In the Form One class, for example, one or two pupils were very productive, while one of the girls in the 'independent' group invariably left some of her exercise books at home and would often start some writing tasks again, even though she might have written a substantial amount the previous day (this occurred with both the Ancient Egypt project and booklet on friendship, as these

tasks were spread over several days).

In order to illustrate variations in productivity, here is an example from the Form One class when they wrote a story from their own list of topics. Almost as soon as the class was informed of this task, pupils were busily engaged in writing or looking about the room, perhaps thinking of ideas to include in their story (particularly Belinda and Craig). After quarter of an hour, in draft form, the pupils had written the following amounts: Adam had nearly filled a whole page (about 30 lines) entitled 'Journey through the Body'; Belinda had done about 10 lines of 'Wait Till Midnight' (a fair quantity for a reluctant starter); Craig had written about two-thirds of a page (his title was 'Mad Scientist'); and Dennis had scrawled his way diagonally across a tatty sheet of yellow paper (unlined) writing about 'One Camp I Went On'.

After another 25 minutes most of these pupils and the rest of the class were writing assiduously, though Adam was not engaged in writing then because he had run out of folio paper. Meanwhile, Craig's spelling mistakes had been corrected by the teacher and he had written 1½ pages altogether. He was starting on his second copy.

Secondly, there was not a uniform pattern of productivity across tasks, i.e., the same pupils were not always the most or least copious writers. In the Form One class, for example, Adam was one of the most copious producers of 'factual' writing, but with the sentence completion exercise and the booklet on friendship he produced the least amount of all the case study pupils. Belinda, however, wrote more for the sentence completion exercise than the other case study pupils, while the text of her booklet on friendship was one of the briefest. On the other hand, Craig wrote about the same as the class average for both the sentence completion exercise and the booklet on friendship, but unlike Adam and Belinda who wrote stories close to the class average length, one of his stories was among the longest produced by any of the pupils. Dennis, though, wrote more than anyone else for the booklet on friendship, while his stories were among the briefest of any of the pupils'. In other words, how much a pupil wrote appeared to be determined by the nature of the task and the extent to which the pupils found the task to their liking.

Thirdly, at least in the Form One class, considerable variations occurred in the extent to which different pupils checked or edited

their written work. Belinda's writing rarely contained errors of any kind, and in her drafts for the 'imaginative' stories she had clearly made an effort to edit her first copy. Craig was able to copy correctly, but tended to make spelling and syntactical mistakes when the input was his own, as did Adam who vacillated between largely error-free writing and copied material with large numbers of errors, possibly because he had simply not applied his proofreading skills consistently either from task to task or from one day to the next. Dennis had trouble with spelling and was unlikely to produce entirely 'correct' writing, even when his story drafts had been modified by the teacher. In general, pupils did not seem to have internalized proofreading procedures to any great extent. (See the pupil profiles.)

In the Form Two class, on the other hand, pupils were required to do two copies for most types of writing, with the first copy being rigorously checked by the teacher. It is possible that, since pupils knew their 'drafts' would be corrected for them, they put little or no effort into proofreading their first copies. Frank, for example, made this observation:

Obs: *When you have finished writing this story what are you going to do with it?*

Fr: *The teacher will probably mark it and I will probably have to write it out again.*

Obs: *What changes will you make?*

Fr: *I won't make any of them, because when I've just whited out the mistakes the teacher will fix all the mistakes I made, and I will write out the mistakes.*

As has already been mentioned, Erin stated that she let the teacher proof and correct her work to save effort; on the other hand, she did make an effort to check her drafts carefully as she used correcting fluid a great deal. Harry, as did Dennis in the Form One class, appeared to disregard proofreading altogether and had difficulty putting together a coherent text. However, the procedures in this class were very well-established, and pupils were kept aware of the need to check their writing carefully, a practice which was not observed in the Form One class apart from the revision pupils were expected to carry out on the drafts of their 'imaginative' stories.

Fourthly, there were variations among the pupils in the time they required to settle into some writing tasks. In the Form One class, perhaps because of the interest generated by the different approach

applied, nearly the whole class became absorbed in writing their first self-chosen story almost straightaway. With tasks which were spread over several days, such as the Ancient Egypt project and the booklet on friendship, the pupils' interest often dissipated, resulting in little writing being done at certain times. And, of course, there were also variations from pupil to pupil. Some were very quick to commence any task and would assiduously apply themselves until that task was finished; others had an initial burst of enthusiastic application which would then wane, though the teacher's reminder of a deadline would often contribute to further dedication to the task in hand (some pupils seemed capable of writing very quickly if pressure was indirectly applied); other pupils spent considerable time organizing themselves before they even put pen to paper, such as Belinda, while a few like Dennis waited for the teacher to come and assist them before they began writing. No doubt temperament and work habits both played a part in accounting for these differences.

Here is an illustration of the different procedures adopted over the same 25-minute period by the Form One class, about a week after the Ancient Egypt project was initiated. Those copying from the black-board were required to write notes about the Pharaohs and to draw a picture. Craig, for example, wrote several lines and then put his books away for a few minutes. However, after looking around the classroom he started to work on a timeline. Dennis, on the other hand, did not do any writing at all. He drew for a few minutes, chewed his pen, looked about, and listened to one of his neighbours for 10 minutes or so, interrupted for just a short period when the teacher showed the pupils in his group a picture and talked briefly about it.

At the same time, Adam and Belinda were taking notes from their own reference books and mixing information-gathering with socialising. Adam spent about a third of his time taking notes on Mummies while the remainder was spent looking about the room, playing with his pen and chatting to his neighbours. Belinda also chatted away at various times to her two neighbours, and sent a note to another pupil nearby. Her project-work over this short period consisted of colouring in a photocopied picture. With any exercise which requires a prolonged period for completion it is probably inevitable that interest will wane at some points and that pupils will engage in

'off-task' behaviour. But it is worth noting just how individual pupils do vary in their work habits even over a small time-span.

Fifthly, with respect to writing matters, interaction between the teacher and individual pupils varied greatly from pupil to pupil. For example, those in the 'independent' group in the Form One class were frequently left to work entirely by themselves, and once a task had been set for them rarely required any guidance from the teacher. However, on occasions they did discuss among themselves what they were doing: for example, the four girls in this group once exchanged one of their stories, with each girl reading the other girls' efforts and making laudatory comments about what had been written. Some pupils seemed to enjoy talking to their neighbours about their writing, while others simply carried on by themselves (e.g., Frank in the Form Two class). The other pupils in the Form One class were not always engaged in the same activity and thus there was less scope for discussion related to a specific writing task; however, they tended to require assistance from the teacher more frequently and if left by themselves, unsure of how to handle a task, would simply fool around with their neighbours instead of seeking assistance from them. In the Form Two class, however, Harry often sought help from two other pupils in particular, though the help received more often than not consisted merely of copying out what the others had already written.

In the Form Two class, as in the Form One, teacher-pupil interaction was more frequently observed when a task was being initiated than during its execution, though both teachers would circulate about their classroom offering encouraging comments. Some pupils seemed prepared to seek out the teacher wherever she was in the room if they had a query (e.g., Belinda) while others tended to wait till the teacher was near them before asking a question. Many pupils seemed quite happy to continue their writing tasks day-by-day without interacting with the teacher at all. Pupil-to-pupil interaction was probably most frequent when tasks were being started (and largely confined to borrowing pens), apart from the extended 'imaginative' stories when some pupils exchanged ideas and seemed keen to read what their neighbours had written.

Sixthly, there did not appear to be any difficulties associated with the art of writing which were common to all pupils in the two classes observed. Generally, once pupils had been informed of a writing task they carried it out willingly, although clear differences among

individuals could be detected in the amounts written over a specified period of time (i.e., their capacity to generate or produce a 'text') and the quality of language used. Despite the absence of detailed textual analysis in this study, it was evident that there were large differences among pupils not only in their control of the surface features of language (such as spelling, sentence structure, grammar) but in the sophistication of ideas presented in their written work. A few pupils had severe spelling difficulties, while others - even some of the most competent writers - appeared to follow some language conventions rather inconsistently.

SUMMARY

The Teaching of Writing

(i) Both teachers encouraged their pupils to write and provided an attractive classroom environment for written work.

(ii) A considerable amount of writing was displayed in both classes.

(iii) Not all pupils were required to do the same tasks in the Form One class; this depended on the group a pupil was assigned to. And in the Form Two class 'good' pupils could do extra work.

(iv) Overall, brief kinds of writing of a factual/descriptive nature were more common than extended 'imaginative' pieces.

(v) The extent of teacher control over the writing process and the written product varied markedly between the classes.

(vi) Little attention appeared to be paid to revision or editing procedures in the Form One class, though rewriting copy was emphasized in the Form Two class.

(vii) The nature and volume of corrections made to pupils' writing varied, i.e., the Form One and Two teachers differed in the importance attached to correct language usage.

(viii) The overall goals of the teachers differed: one emphasized building personal confidence, the other production of accurate copy.

The Pupils' Approaches to Writing

(i) Considerable attention was given to 'decoration', i.e., adornment of the written page.

(ii) The amount written varied considerably from pupil to pupil on the same tasks.

(iii) There was not a uniform pattern of productivity across tasks: how much was written depended on the task, the time available, etc., and the same pupils did not necessarily write the most on all tasks.

(iv) Generally, proofreading was absent. Pupils varied widely in the accuracy of their language usage.

(v) Work habits varied: some pupils took a long time to settle down, others raced into tasks, though some faded after getting started.

(vi) There were different levels of teacher/pupil interaction, depending on the pupil's needs and willingness to speak up.

(vii) Spelling was a widespread problem, as was sentencing, but there appeared to be no other common difficulties.

6. WRITTEN WORK IN THE FORM THREE CLASSROOM

I Writing Tasks Set

A *Activities Involving Writing*

In the five-week period observed a wide variety of tasks was assigned to the students (principally in English, because of the particular unit covered), in addition to notetaking, answering test questions, heading work and making lists. However, during the observational period, the third-form students tended to write short pieces rather than extended ones, and to devote much of their time to providing single word or single sentence responses to teacher-generated or worksheet/textbook questions.

WRITING OBSERVED IN THE FORM THREE CLASS

1. ENGLISH

(i) Copied (from blackboard or overhead transparencies)
(ii) Lists
(iii) Captions
(iv) Collages
(v) Phrases/Sentences
(vi) Paragraphs

(vii) Letters
(viii) Essays

2. SOCIAL/ECONOMIC STUDIES

(i) Copied
(ii) Lists
(iii) Captions
(iv) Maps, Charts, Tables, Diagrams
(v) Test
(vi) Notes
(vii) Phrases/Sentences
(viii) Paragraphs

3. SCIENCE

(i) Copied
(ii) Lists
(iii) Tables/Charts
(iv) Tests
(v) Notes
(vi) Phrases/Sentences (reporting results of experiments)

1. ENGLISH

(i) Copied

The English teacher required very little copied work. Apart from the daily topics suggested for regular Journal writing and homework assignments written in personal logbooks, copying was required on only two occasions: when the pupils recorded the aims for a unit on newspapers and, from the blackboard, copied the layout of a business letter for reference purposes.

(ii) Lists

The students compiled only one list. It contained class members' names for and against a proposal, as part of an opinion poll, and was one of a series of tasks included in a unit entitled the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier'.

(iii) Captions

The drawing and labelling of two maps were also part of the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' unit. These maps required the use of captions, labels, keys and the like. For example:

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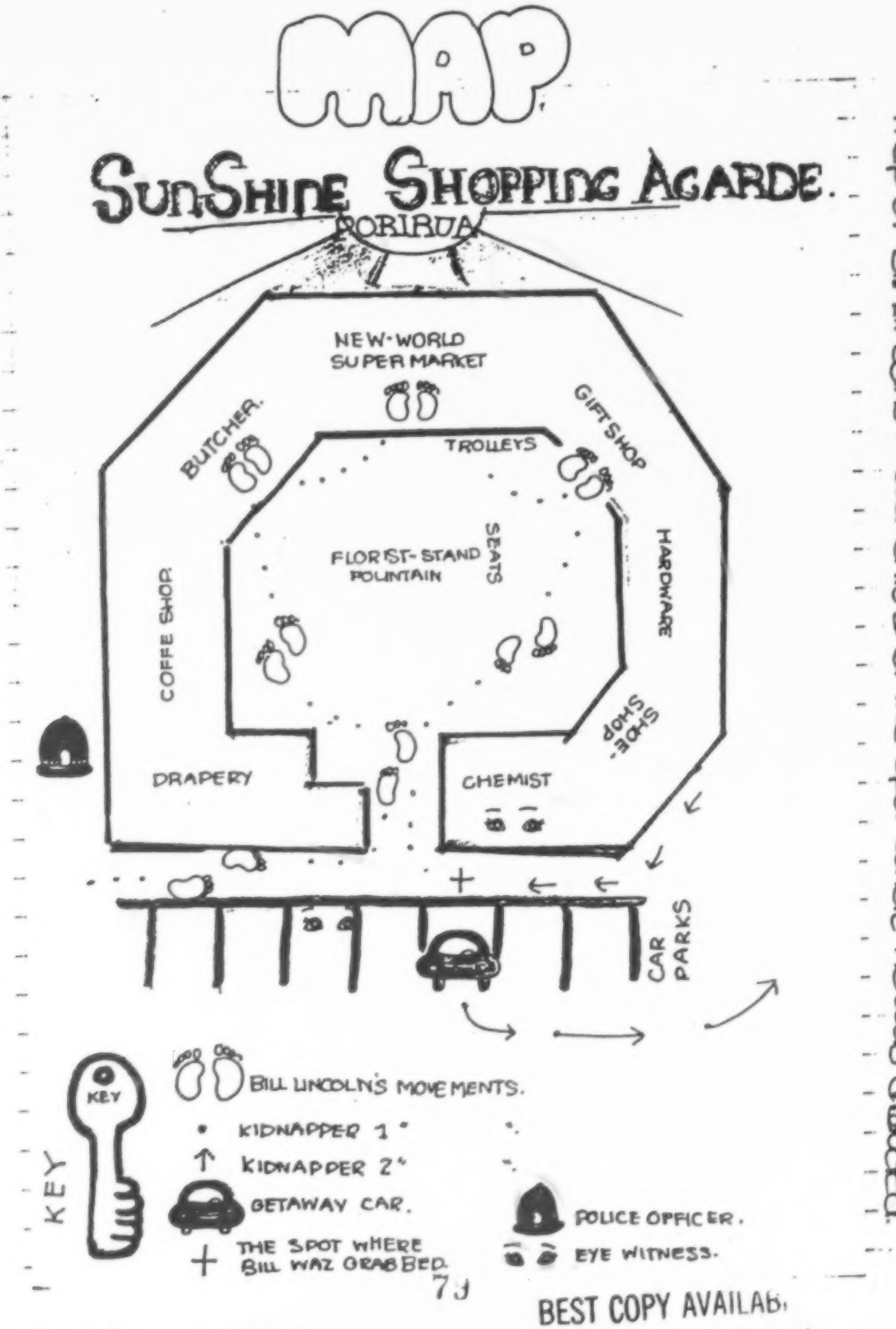

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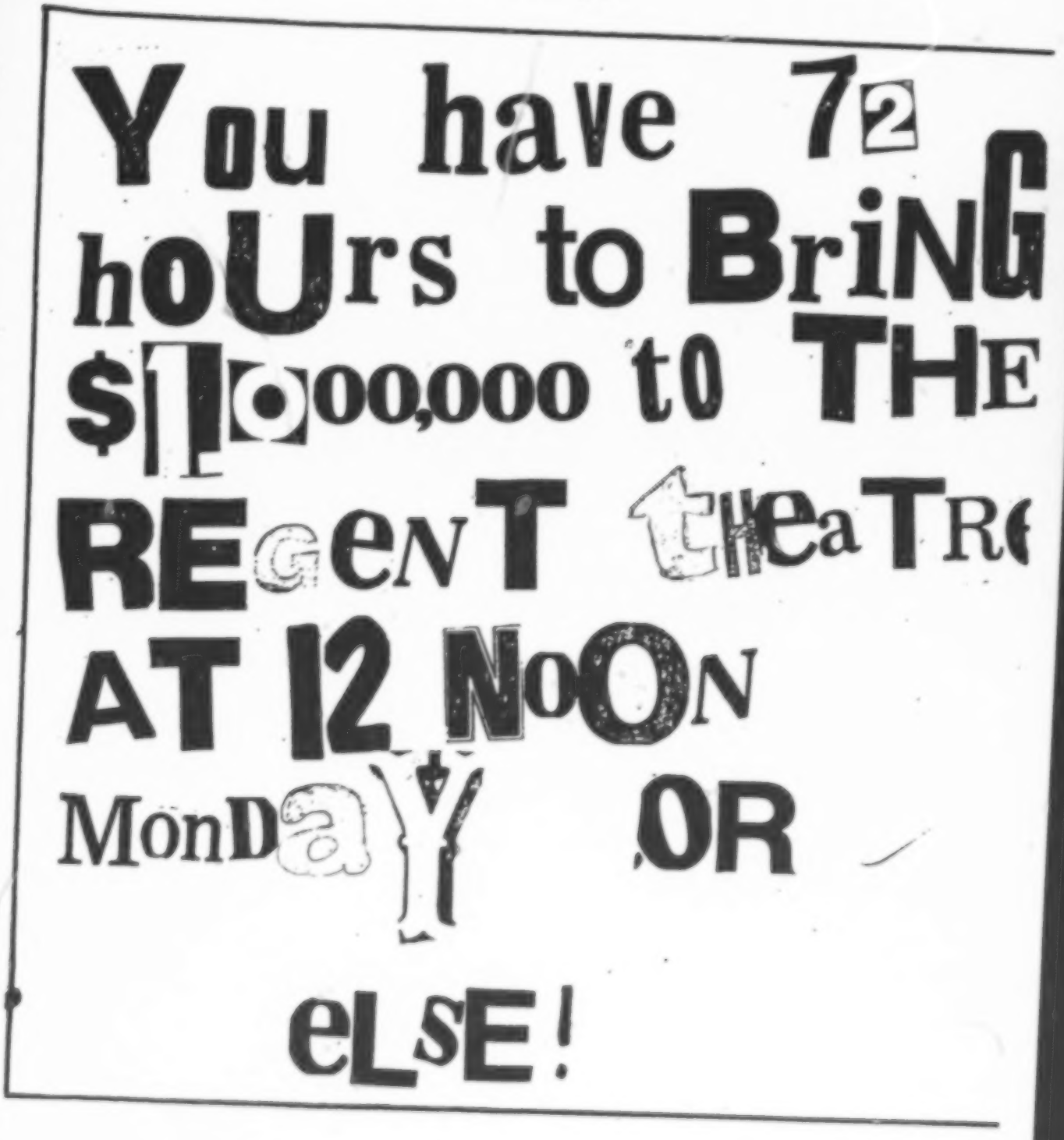
(iv) Collages

Three collages were assigned as part of the 'Dossier' unit, one of which was the compilation of a ransom note from words cut out of newspapers and magazines. The other two activities required no writing as such from the pupils who were asked to role play and to choose appropriate words for a given situation ('The Mind of the Kidnapper' and 'Bill in Captivity').



Su

students on writing activities

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(v) Phrases and Sentences

Much of the writing over the observed period was carried out to fulfil the requirements of the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier'. Caption writing, ransom notes (in collage form), school reports (teacher comments) and diary entries all required a few short phrases or sentences. Apart from the 'Dossier' activities and daily Journal entries, responses to a comprehension exercise (a 'fill-in' task done at short notice), answers to written teacher questions, short questionnaires and textbook exercises also required brief pieces of writing, usually only one or two sentences in length, though these assignments were relatively infrequent. For example:

Teacher questions to be answered by students on completion of the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier':

Evaluation (your opinion of the unit)

1. *Do you feel that this unit has improved your English in any way? How? (or why not?).*
2. *Which part of the unit did you most enjoy? Why?*
3. *Which part of the unit did you least enjoy? Why?*
4. *Are there any areas of your work which you feel need improving? Which?*
5. *Why do you think you were asked to do this dossier?*

Newspaper Unit

As a group, on a sheet of cardboard - for wall display - give your views on:

1. *How much advertising there is.*
2. *Why there is so much or so little.*
3. *Why does a newspaper have advertising?*

Kidnapper's Hideout (from 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier'):

The Hideout.

Reasons why the kidnappers chose this particular place: 1. The buildings' colour blends into the trees surrounding it which also hide the building.
2. The closeness of the river and phone-box; for fresh water and ransoms phone-call.
3. The right distance away from the township.
4. There was no fear of anyone coming by as one of the kidnappers owned the cabin.
5. All of the kidnappers knew the area ~~and~~ so could run away and not get lost if the hideout was stormed.

Primary Teachers Report (from 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier'):

PRIMARY TEACHER'S REPORT...

(3.) Name: John Rogers Class: FORM 2

Age: 14 [redacted]

School: Mississippi Junior High

Reading John is not putting enough effort into reading.

assessment 1 2 3 (4) 5 APPLICATION A B (C) D

writing His writting style has still remained the same - messy and hard to read.

ASSESMENT 1 2 3 4 (5) APPLICATION A B C (D)

ARITHMETIC John is quite good at this subject.

assessment 1 (2) 3 4 5 application A (B) C D

Sport enjoys running!

assesment (1) 2 3 4 5 aplication A (B) C D

Art A good drawer.

Behaviour: Answers back alot and when told to do something he doesn't do it until he gets

(vi) Paragraphs

Short paragraphs of two or more sentences were often required to complete reports, as diary or journal entries, or to summarize an account or an opinion. Pupils wrote these paragraph-length pieces without teacher guidance and usually without recourse to drafts. As a result, many were simply blocks of words lacking development of ideas, with the appearance of a paragraph.

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(vii) Letters

A few letters were required over the 5-week period. The 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' required two 'formal' letters to be written, using appropriate language for the audience (a letter from the President of the United Atlantic States to Mr Muldoon and Mr Muldoon's reply), and a letter to the Youth Focus page of the *Evening Post* on a topic of some concern to the pupils. Over the three periods involved a brief discussion was followed by the preparation of a draft, proof-reading, and the writing of the final copy. The draft copy preparation was also assigned for homework on two consecutive nights.

(viii) Essays

Subsumed under this heading are all the extended pieces of writing, sometimes involving the more capable students in compositions of up to two or three pages. Included are various kinds of reports, reported conversations, articles, speeches, character descriptions, and eyewitness accounts. All these exercises formed part of the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier'. Students were required to write them from a variety of viewpoints and for diverse audiences, employing different styles appropriate for those audiences. As a result, pupils were provided with several opportunities for practising different registers. Although the material provided to the class in the nine pages of worksheets was relatively well-structured, and examples of completed dossiers from a Hamilton school were available as models, the students had considerable opportunity to write imaginatively. For example:

Constable Rumble is on patrol in the shopping area. He hears yells and screams and rushes to the kidnap spot. He is told what has happened and calls Police H.Q. on his walkie-talkie. What does he say?

You are on the news team for T.V. station STV4. You are doing a report on the kidnap. Prepare your programme, then televise it. Things to decide when preparing your report:

What will be the best way to present my report?
What needs to be taken into account?
Perhaps: The validity of the witness' story.
The time available on the evening news.
Sensation compared with minor detail.
(etc.)

The kidnapper rings up the Prime Minister to arrange payment of the ransom. Write out the conversation, then record it on a tape recorder.

Kidnapper: Is that you, Prime Minister?

Prime Minister: Yes!

Kidnapper:

P.M.:

K.:

Make up a police report on the kidnappers including 'mug shots', finger prints, and the kidnappers' profiles.

Students worked at their own pace on these activities over ten hour-long periods towards a previously advised deadline. As a result, at any given moment no two students were likely to be working on exactly the same task. Nor was writing the only activity involved: page decorating, drawing, lettering, rewriting or copying out, pasting, tape-recording, taking opinion polls, discussion with peers and the teacher might all be occurring simultaneously.

2. SOCIAL/ECONOMIC STUDIES

(i) Copied

The third-form students were sometimes required to copy material prepared by the teachers from overhead transparencies, the blackboard, textbooks or worksheets. The copying often involved writing down questions to be answered in the students' own words, the structure of more complicated charts and diagrams, and summaries of major points arising from discussion.

(ii) Lists

On several occasions students were asked to prepare lists. Often the purpose was to compare and contrast life styles, living conditions, human circumstances and the like. For example, a unit on 'A Day on Fakaofo' required lists to be compiled under these headings:

FAKAOFO	*PORIRUA*
Climate: Much warmer *Not as many clothes* *Housing:* *Food:* *School:* *Transport:* *Jobs:* *Family life:*	*Cooler, wool and warm clothes required*

In another unit, using the resource book *Many Races - One Control* (Pepper), pupils were requested to do the following:

Head up "City Life"

Look at page 23. Look at the photos and the words. Then try to list 5 facts about Bantu people in the city.

The teacher's expectation was that such lists would be completed during the one-hour instructional period or during the period plus one night's homework.

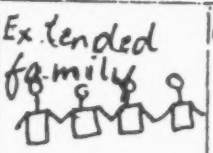
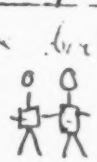
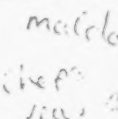
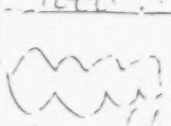
(iii) Captions

On one occasion students were required to write captions for photographs of aspects of Pacific Island life as summaries of what was depicted. Writing followed group discussion during which the 'essence' of the photograph was captured in words and progressively refined by the group members.

(iv) Maps, Charts, Tables and Diagrams

Labelling, condensing material to note form in order to fit charts, and choosing headings to accurately title material were also required. Considerable thought was required of the pupils in deciding what main ideas should be incorporated to fit the space available. For example, see next page.

Western Samoa N.Z. Difficulty in N.Z

 Extended family Aiga.	 Ch. brother	A Samoan person would find living locally at first in New Zealand. He would be used to all his cousins and uncles etc. to them.
Apia	Auckland	A Samoan would have to adapt to the population difference. He wouldn't know many people here, when he'd know every person all in Apia.
Talofa	Hi	A Samoan would also have to get used to the language difference. It could be very embarrassing & confusing for him.
Fale	House.	Housing would also be a problem. They would have to get used to having walls and ceilings & normal New Zealand house appliances.
mea'ai	 meal/lunch/ chop/ pie/ steak/ food/ ugga	A Samoan would be used to coconuts & not lots of meat and cheese. Ice creams and ice-cream would be something different for them.
weather	 weather	It is hardly ever cold in Samoa, and sometimes it's very cold in NZ. They would have to buy new clothes and their bodies would have to adapt.

(v) Test

In the third week, one complete period was devoted to a test on the 'Pacific Islands' unit with students answering one word, short phrases or completion-type questions. In addition, individuals were required to evaluate their own performance on several criteria, and to provide written feedback on the unit for the teacher.

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(vi) Notes

During the observational period material for two different units was presented: 'Pacific Islands Study' and 'Multiracial Societies'. Students took their own notes from several sources: school bulletins ('Atoll' - Graham Keen), school journals ('A Year in Samoa'), magazine articles ('Samoa - A Pacific Paradox' in *N.Z. Listener*, November 1982) and commercially published booklets and textbooks. Attention was focussed on the sections from which notes were to be taken either by providing references, e.g.:

> *See if you can find out what happened in 1948. Read the 'Acts', (p.14).*

or by posing a question, sometimes also with a page reference, e.g.:

> *Explain how the Dutch people arrived in South Africa. Have a look at p.8-10, photos and diaries.*

Occasionally, a few students were asked to read out their sentences and the teacher commented on the comprehensiveness of the notes taken. For students who complained of being 'stuck', the teacher sometimes provided assistance by writing appropriate sentence beginnings on the blackboard, e.g.:

> *During this time the Dutch people moved to set up their own areas where they could ... (rules) (fights).*

(vii) Phrases and Sentences

Much of the writing in Social/Economic Studies involved brief factual responses to questions posed directly by the teachers, or to blackboard or worksheet questions. Pupils commonly wrote three- or four-line answers to these questions. For example:

United Nations Principles of Human Rights

① All Humans beings are born free and equal. Separate public places and things (shops, po, seats, bus, area entry and exits) for Blacks and whites

② Everyone has the right to move and live anywhere in their Country
Africans can be deported from white areas

③ Men and Women have the right to ~~marry~~ and have children with whoever they

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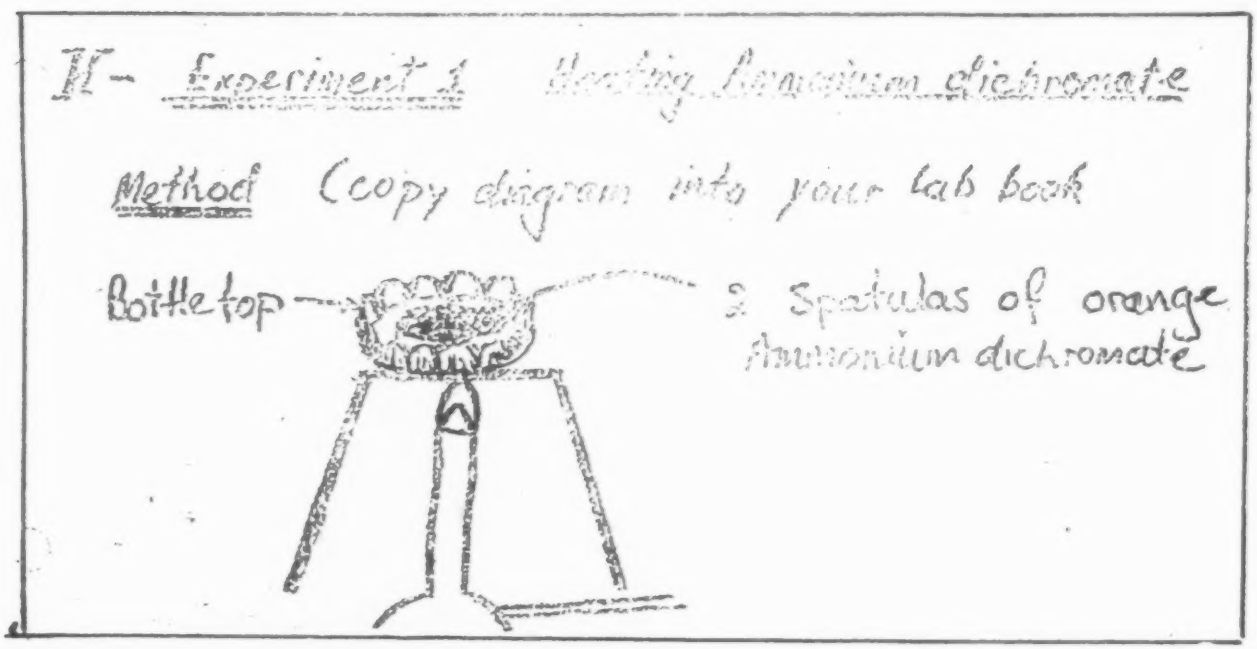
(viii) Paragraphs/Essays

For some activities, more able students were encouraged to write extended answers, outlines, sets of reasons or descriptions. The unit on the 'Pacific Islands', for example, suggested that 'advanced' students could provide a Wellington itinerary for a Tokelauan pupil from Fakaofo so that the differences between cultures would be highlighted and, from the unit on 'Multiracial Societies', pupils were given the opportunity to write a short story, poem or song, or draw a cartoon strip on topics such as a shopping trip, Christmas, your house, your father, or white people, imagining that they were a black African and, as a second task, from the point of view of a white South African. Several students responded with a page or more of writing on topics of this kind. Frequently, such written work begun in class was required to be finished as homework.

3. SCIENCE

(i) Copied

In the Science class, the commonest type of writing required was copying, either from overhead transparencies, the blackboard, or prepared worksheets into lab books, for example: definitions, methods used for experiments, summaries of experiments or discussions of findings from experiments, and diagrams with their labels.


II- Experiment 1 Heating Ammonium dichromate
Method (copy diagram into your lab book
Bottle top
2 Spatulas of orange Ammonium dichromate

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(ii) Lists

Listing was rarely required. In one instance, pupils were asked to list the names and chemical symbols of 20 elements and, in another, to match them up as follows:

Questions

1. Copy List A and match up with the appropriate statement from List B.

List A	List B
Mixture	Conducts electricity
Single Substance	Made up of one kind of atom
Compound	One or more different types of atom chemically joined.
Metal	Two or more different types of atom together, but not chemically joined.
Element	Two or more different types of atoms chemically joined.

(iii) Tables/Charts

A considerable proportion of the writing done in Science involved the completion of tables and charts by inserting one word or a short phrase. The incomplete charts were always provided in a textbook, in a worksheet or on an overhead transparency, e.g.:

(b) Copy and complete the following table. Some information is already provided.

Group	2 examples	similarities in the properties of these elements
one		
two	calcium, magnesium	
seven		
eight		all are inert gases

(c) Copy the part of the Periodic Table near the beginning of this section. Write the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 beneath the correct column. At the left of this line write the label: 'Number of atoms this group can combine with'.

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(iv) Tests

Tests featured prominently in Science, compared with the other two subject-areas. In four of the six weeks observed, a test was given. These tests ranged from a 10-minute test of recall of element names and symbols to a full-period, end-of-unit test on types of matter.

(v) Notes

Notetaking was required during several lessons, particularly during the teaching of the topic, 'Types of Matter', where students worked from photocopied sections of a text. Much of this activity was highly structured with a large amount of teacher direction. Notes were to be 'in sentences' or 'in whole sentences' and were made after reading, and sometimes discussion, of specific sections of the textbook material.

(vi) Phrases and Sentences

Almost all of the reporting of experiments, class discussions and worksheet exercises required responses of a single word, phrase or sentence. Typical exercises were:

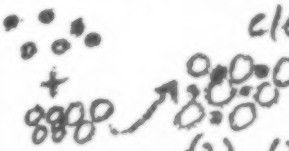
(a) Filling in gaps in statements with pupils choosing words from a list, or from their own reading, usually following a discussion just before the exercise. For example:

> In your notebook
>
> Write the heading 'How atoms differ'.
>
> (a) Atoms have the same number of ..... in orbit as they have ..... in the nucleus.
> (b) The atomic number of an element tells us how many ..... and ..... its atoms have.
> (c) The weight of an atom is determined by the number of ..... and ..... in its nucleus.
> (d) If an element contains unstable atoms which throw off nuclear particles it is said to be .....
> (e) In your notebook, use a compass to draw diagrams showing atoms of helium, lithium, carbon, oxygen and magnesium. Print the captions for each.
> (f) The innermost level or shell will hold up to ..... electrons. The second level or shell will hold up to ..... electrons.

copy + complete

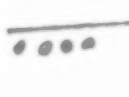
2.

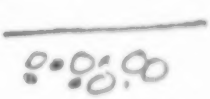
Question: (1) When an element burns in air, the atoms of the element join with the atoms of O - - g - - in the air to form a c - - - - - - d



(2) Which two elements were used in this experiment?

(3) (complete) 'I have made the compound from _____ and _____ its called _____





(b) Responding to teacher questions or directions written on the overhead transparency or blackboard, e.g.:

Chemistry is the study of Substances.

What are they like? Physical Properties

Students provide examples in brackets ( )

How do they behave or react? Chemical Properties

( )

Iron is found in earth as iron oxide. What kind of substance is this?

1. *What state of matter is ammonium dichromate?*
2. *Describe ammonium dichromate.*
3. *Heat it and describe what happens.*
4. *What state of matter is formed?*
5. *Name two other states of matter.*
6. *Why was heat needed to get the ammonium dichromate particles to do what they did?*

(c) Recording observations of experiments in the pupils' 'own' words following a pre-determined structure and sequence. This type of writing involved the most extended responses and up to five or six sentences might be written by some students. For example, Julian wrote:

Aim: Writing words from observation.

Method: Place a piece of Magnesium ribbon in a deflagrating spoon and heat it in a bunsen flame. When the magnesium starts to burn Do Not look straight at the light. It will Hurt your eyes.
Look at the substance you have made then scrape it into the jar.

OBSERVATIONS: 1) I saw that the Magnesium was a silver colour.
2) When I put the Magnesium in the flame it started to burn then it sparked off into a bright flame.
3) I saw that the Magnesium went a white colour.

Conclusion: (A) When an element burns in oxygen it forms a new element you call the name of the element you with the atoms of Oxygen in the air to form a new element.
2) When the elements were mixed in the experiment Mag Ox.
3) [illegible]

B *Was There a Typical Week's Written Work?*

Apart from a few periods in each of the subject-areas observed, writing was an everyday activity, with shorter pieces up to a few sentences long being most common. Extended writing, over a couple of paragraphs in length, was rare. There were some differences from subject to subject, however, though in each case the pattern was relatively consistent from week to week.

English, because of the kinds of work attempted, varied the

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most. Journal writing, supposedly a daily activity, was so for very few students. The 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' presented a variety of incentives for writing and enabled all pupils to engage in some writing or closely allied activity, such as making a collage, each day. The 'Newspaper' unit required less writing, more class discussion and group, rather than individual, activity. Social/Economic Studies followed a more predictable pattern as much of the writing involved three or four line answers to questions posed by the teacher, or even shorter responses in completing tables and charts following a structure provided by the teacher. In Science, pupils spent much of their time copying, completing exercises using a single word, phrase or sentence, or filling in charts and tables.

Much of the writing undertaken by the students during any given week was factual and descriptive, in response to teacher, textbook or worksheet directions or questions. Apart from sections of the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' and one or two extra activities in Social/Economic Studies, little scope was given for 'imaginative' writing.

C *Time Given to Written Work*

Because of the nature of the writing-related activities undertaken in the three subject-areas it is difficult to provide figures which indicate precisely how much time was spent solely on writing. During English, for example, when the class was working on the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' unit, some students wrote for a considerable portion of the period while others, at the same time, engaged in searching for suitable material for collages, drawing maps, colouring in headings, illustrating kidnapper profiles which, though non-writing activities, were still very much part of the task the class had been assigned. Any estimate of 'class' writing time can therefore only be a crude average.

Similarly, in Social/Economic Studies, at particular stages in the lessons making up a unit, students could choose from activities at two or three levels of difficulty. Some of the activities, particularly those designed for the more able students, involved more reading and writing than others. Again, a 'class' average masks the varying amounts of time spent by some of the

students on writing activities.

Science, on the other hand, was a more tightly structured subject for all students with greater uniformity in both the length of time devoted to writing tasks and in the quantity of written work produced.

The third-form class was observed for a total of 45 one-hour periods. The total time involved was 2,700 minutes, of which 900 minutes were spent in English classes, 840 in Social/Economic Studies and 960 in Science. The total time spent in Social/Economic Studies classes was reduced since four periods were not observed, either because of the researcher's commitments, or because no writing was scheduled for the lesson planned, or teacher illness. All subjects were timetabled and taught for three periods each week.

The tables below include teacher introductions and explanations specifically on the writing tasks (rather than often lengthy discussions, or stimulation provided by the teacher leading up to the actual writing activity) and the time students took, on average, to accomplish the writing task.

TABLE 3: *Time allowed for observed types of writing (English, Social/Economic Studies and Science combined) (Form 3)*

	WEEK						Total Minutes	%
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Copied	15	52	55	57	40	22	241	*15.8*
Lists	15	-	15	25	17	30	102	*6.7*
Captions	15	24	-	15	-	5	59	*3.9*
Collages	-	15	15	-	-	-	30	*2.0*
Tables/Charts	29	55	55	29	25	15	208	*13.7*
Tests	-	-	50	35	10	50	145	*9.5*
Notes (folder)	12	-	-	-	70	45	127	*8.3*
Phrases/Sentences	44	65	70	47	50	24	300	*19.7*
Paragraphs	15	12	15	25	12	15	94	*6.2*
Letters	-	20	20	-	40	90	170	*11.2*
Essays	12	15	20	-	-	-	47	*3.1*
Total	157	258	315	233	264	296	1523	

TABLE 4: *Time given to different types of writing in English (Form 3)*

	WEEK						Total Minutes	%
	1*	2†	3	4†	5	6z		
Copied	-	-	-	12	-	15	27	5.5
Lists		-	15	-	-	-	15	3.0
Captions	10	12	-	-	-	-	22	4.4
Collages	-	15	15	-	-	-	30	6.1
Phrases/Sentences	12	30	20	35	30	-	127	25.7
Paragraphs	15	12	15	15	-	-	57	11.5
Letters	-	20	20	-	40	90	170	34.3
Essays	12	15	20	-	-	-	47	9.6
Total	49	104	105	62	70	105	495	

* 1 period only observed
† Included a 30-minute library period
z 2-period week (Labour Day Monday)

TABLE 5: *Time given to different types of writing in Social/Economic Studies (Form 3)*

	WEEK						Total Minutes	%
	1*	2	3*	4*	5*	6		
Copied	-	7	-	10	15	7	39	8.6
Lists	15	-	-	-	17	30	62	13.6
Captions	5	12	-	15	-	5	37	8.1
Maps, Charts, etc.	17	40	15	12	-	15	99	21.8
Test	-	-	40	-	-	-	40	8.8
Notes	12	-	-	-	25	15	52	11.4
Phrases/Sentences	15	10	20	12	20	12	89	19.6
Paragraphs	-	-	-	10	12	15	37	8.1
Total	64	69	75	59	89	99	455	

* 2 periods only observed

TABLE 6: *Time given to different types of writing in Science (Form 3)*

	WEEK						Total Minutes	%
	1*	2	3	4	5	6z		
Copied	15	45	55	35	25	-	175	30.5
Lists	-	-	-	25	-	-	25	4.4
Tables/Charts	12	15	40	17	25	-	109	19.0
Tests	-	-	10	35	10	50	105	18.3
Notes	-	-	-	-	45	30	75	13.1
Phrases/Sentences (Expts.)	17	25	30	-	-	12	84	14.7
Total	44	85	135	112	105	92	573	

* 2 periods only observed
z 2-period week (Labour Day Monday)

It is clear from Table 3 that students spent most of their time writing phrases or sentence-length responses, and completing tables and charts using either one or two word responses or short phrases and sentences, although these were sometimes in note form. Together, these two activities accounted for a third of the writing done by the class. Letter writing also featured prominently in one of the English units. Nearly 16 percent of the writing involved copying material from the blackboard or overhead transparencies. However, writing done in Science periods accounted for most of this figure. All the remaining writing activities made up less than 10 percent of the written work undertaken by the class during the observational period.

Subject variations are evident from Tables 4, 5 and 6.

In English (Table 4), as mentioned previously, the nature of the units taught over the 6-week period dictated the types of writing done by the class. Hence, letter writing featured prominently because 3 of the 15 periods observed were devoted *specifically* to this form of writing and, in the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' unit, two letters were required as part of the assignment. Phrase and sentence-length responses also predominated because of the kinds of answers required in many of the sub-topics within the 'Dossier' unit. Fully one-third of the assignments (profiles,

reports, conversations, diaries, notes) required short written responses. Little scope was provided for extended writing of more than a page. Hence, essay writing accounts for less than 10 percent of the written work in English.

Four types of writing accounted for most of the time spent on written work in Social/Economic Studies (Table 5). The completion of maps, charts, diagrams and the like, following a teacher-devised structure (21.8%), compiling lists, again following a structure provided by the teacher (13.6%) and the making of notes from textbooks or other published material (11.4%) took up two-thirds of the time spent on writing. The other four types (including answering test questions) were all very similar, with about 8 percent each. In comparison with English, little opportunity was provided for extended written responses.

The writing tasks in Science (Table 6) were less varied than in either English or Social/Economic Studies. Two types of writing - the copying of teacher-prepared material and the completion of tables and charts by writing in one or two word responses - accounted for almost half of the writing done. Writing answers to test questions also featured prominently in Science, with nearly one-fifth of the total time devoted to them. Compared with Social/Economic Studies there was a considerable amount of copied work.

On average, just over half of each period observed was allowed for written work in each subject, although there were minor variations:

Science	59.7%
English	55.0%
Social/Economic Studies	54.2%

In other words, in terms of the *time spent* on written work over the duration of the study, the pupils were a little more likely to be engaged in a writing-related activity in Science than in the other two subjects.

D *Organizing the Class for Writing Activities*

All the teachers observed had previously assigned students to particular seating groups which remained relatively constant throughout the study. In the rooms used by the students, furniture varied from the formal and fixed arrangements of tables and benches in the Science laboratory to rows of desks in a room used primarily for Technical Drawing, to groups of up to eight desks arranged in rectangles around the perimeter of large rooms.

When the class was addressed prior to writing activities, the teacher almost always spoke from the front of the room irrespective of its arrangement. Invariably, students sat at their desks when instruction was given and when the whole class was involved in discussion. The class was usually instructed as a complete unit when writing activities were to follow, although in Social/Economic Studies the students received separate group instruction as they occasionally carried out work in groups at different levels. All students, therefore, usually worked on the same unit of work at the same time, except in Social/Economic Studies.

In all subjects the students received clear and detailed instructions on what was required of them, written either on the blackboard, an overhead transparency or on worksheets. Very often the teacher worked systematically through these requirements with the class as a whole, elaborating on some aspects and clarifying tasks when students needed further information. As the quantity to be written was rarely specified, however, students made their own decisions on how much to write.

Collaborative group work, more particularly on joint experiments, was a feature of much of the work in Science and to a lesser extent in Social/Economic Studies. The Newspaper Unit in English also required students to work together to produce wall charts and summaries of news stories.

Written work was almost exclusively in exercise books (lab books in Science) or on loose-leaf sheets that were later stapled together to form booklets (the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' in English). Writing was also done in a separate book for Journal entries and in log books for recording homework assignments, special messages and personal memos. On one occasion, in Social/Economic Studies, a separate sheet was compiled by students as a unit test.

E *The Teachers' Actions During Class Writing Activities*

The teachers in all subject-areas initiated nearly all of the writing activity by posing oral or written questions, requiring written answers, or by providing stimulus situations to which the students were required to respond in writing.

Lengthy discussions and the building up of a set of experiences, modified by teacher and student commentary, often preceded the writing task, particularly in English and Social/Economic Studies. Useful phrases, major or interesting points, and headings, to provide a structure, were written on the blackboard or overhead transparencies during this time, as were important terms of a 'technical' nature related to the topic and words which were difficult to spell. Alternatively, students were required to read material set by the teacher, which was sometimes discussed in broad terms before the class answered questions in the text or worksheet, or summarized the print material. This strategy was employed most often by the Science and Social/Economic Studies teachers.

When students had settled to the writing task, all teachers, for the initial part of the period at least, moved about the room checking that students were writing, and clarifying aspects of the exercise for those students who had misunderstood or were experiencing difficulties. They also responded to queries from individuals within groups while the remainder of the class was engaged in writing.

Depending upon how involved the teachers were with the class, they frequently attended to other duties while students were writing, such as administrative tasks, marking work, checking homework, assembling resources from adjacent rooms or preparing material for a later phase of the lesson. All the third-form teachers, however, were involved with individuals or groups for a considerable portion of the time students were writing.

Disciplinary cautions were used in all class periods. Although usually directed to individuals, sometimes the whole class was interrupted and requested to settle down, to reduce the noise level or to minimise movement around the class.

Comments during the writing phase of a lesson were infrequent, but sometimes remarks were made such as: 'I'm pleased at some

of the ideas you're getting down', 'Some of you have some very original ideas on the topic, I see', 'Remember to write in whole sentences using your own words, and 'Try and use your imagination in writing about ...'. At other times, the teachers would ask a student to read out an answer to a question, usually followed by comments on the statements made, and would also request the rest of the class to note a particular aspect of the response given.

Negative comments about students' writing were seldom made in front of the class, even when the piece read was almost incoherent, or factually wrong, or expressed badly. Teachers either did not comment, made a brief non-committal response, or elaborated positively on the answer given. The students made little or no effort to correct or alter their writing; such editing did not appear to be required of them. And, apart from the informal observations made by teachers while walking about the room when students were engaged in writing tasks, no systematic or regular checks seemed to be made on the quantity or quality of the written work produced (see G, *Evaluation of the Pupils' Written Work*).

F *Teachers' Strategies for Pupils with Writing Difficulties*

A large number of students in the third form class appeared to experience learning difficulties, particularly in the language area. While the teachers expressed concern about these pupils, little specific assistance was provided to individuals during writing periods to assist in overcoming recognizable difficulties. Rather, teachers appeared to have adjusted their expectations regarding pupils' written work to match their perception of each student's ability.

Several pupils provide examples of the problems which the teachers had to cope with. George seldom started when the others did, and never wrote more than 25 words in any of the periods observed. His work was rarely finished. Simon, always a poor speller with virtually illegible handwriting, produced no more than half a page in a period. Two other pupils, who had good ideas in discussion, found the task of expressing their ideas in writing extremely difficult: their sentencing was poor,

the written pieces unstructured, and the vocabulary limited. And for some students, like Basil, a period of sustained concentration while writing appeared constantly elusive. Problems such as these may have seemed insurmountable without a great deal of specialised, individual attention which the teachers observed were unable to provide.

Considerable effort was made, however, to ensure that all students organized their writing to meet the teachers' requirements, particularly concerning use of headings, underlining, ruling-off, clear labelling of maps, diagrams, charts, and aspects of presentation, such as writing the day's date. In addition, matters of content and meaning, such as the ideas, issues or concepts the pupils were writing about, received a great deal of attention. Most important, perhaps, the teachers observed regarded themselves as subject teachers, not writing teachers. At least in day-to-day teaching, therefore, the so-called 'surface' or mechanical features of writing (such as spelling, grammar, sentence usage and vocabulary), received less attention than the subject-matter under discussion which provided the impetus for the writing tasks pupils carried out.

G *Evaluation of the Pupils' Written Work*

During the period of observation, students were required to submit their books and units containing written work for formal evaluation once only in each subject area.

In English, for the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' unit, the completed work was collected for marking after the class had been working on it for several weeks. The students knew beforehand from a handout they received how their work was to be evaluated and, as the deadline for finishing it approached, daily reminders were given as 'completion' (i.e., assembling a complete dossier) received 40 percent of the total marks given. A copy of the schedule appears on the next page.

In addition to the marks given for each of the four aspects of the unit being assessed, the English teacher also wrote comments at the foot of the schedule and/or alongside the different components as listed on aspects of language regarded by her as being central to writing, e.g., register, language usage, organization, quality and expression of ideas, and the

SUNSHINE KIDNAP DOSSIER: MARKING SCHEDULE

Dossier components

1. Map of the shopping centre.
2. Constable Rumble's conversation.
3. Two eye-witness accounts.
4. One eye-witness identikit picture.
5. News report for radio or
   newspaper or
   television.
6. President Lincoln's letter to Mr. Muldoon.
7. Mr. Muldoon's reply.
8. Mr. Muldoon's orders to police (tape.)
9. Ransom note.
10. Three kidnappers' profiles.
11. Map of the hideout;
    - reasons why kidnappers chose it.
    - how they guarded it.
12. Bill's diary.
13. How Bill felt in captivity (shaping.)
14. Conversation of kidnapper with Prime Minister.
15. Police Chief John's speech on police line of attack.
16. Murray Forgi's report on police attack.
17. Clyde Askeit's report.
18. Bill's release; report or video.
19. Police report on kidnappers.
20. Kidnapper's report in Know-All.

Mark comprises; TOTAL ____

Work completed	40
Language usage	20
Originality	20
Presentation	20
	100

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like. An example for an above-average student reads as follows:

* Superb vocabulary and language competence. — 100 — 97 and
* Comprehensive coverage of the kidnappers' lives prior to the kidnapping.
* Register of language in the Know. All very good.

* A small pointer – check use of the apostrophe!

and for an average student:

* You organised yourself well [redacted], to have this unit completed ahead of the due date, including the typing you did. — 100 — 37
* Presentation, in terms of typing, is very good.
* Language usage is good, showing a variety of styles depending on the character speaking, or the purpose.

* Vocabulary expansion, use of the apostrophe, and distinguishing between their/there are three areas we'll need to work on for you.

Ticks or comments were also scattered throughout the unit. Such remarks are typical: 'Good – very realistic', 'Excellent!', 'Well-done – good ideas and imaginative presentation', 'V. good'. Very occasionally a spelling mistake was corrected, but comments on such matters as limited vocabulary usage, poor spelling, poor sentence structure or the need to use a dictionary were usually included in the remarks written at the foot of the marking schedule.

The students' Journals containing writing of a more personal nature were also collected once by the English teacher during the observational period. They were usually handed in on a monthly basis, mainly as a check on regularity, since the

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purpose of the exercise was to encourage daily writing. Consequently, the teacher merely ticked the entries and wrote encouraging and positive comments of a personal kind for the student.

Over the year, several evaluative techniques were used by this teacher: grades A-E using + and - for both effort and achievement (school policy), marks out of 10 and 100, ticks for completion of assignments, and verbal comments on specific aspects of the various units of work. Some of these were shown on the students' work, but a more comprehensive recording of progress, achievement, strengths and weaknesses was kept in the teacher's markbook.

Students were also encouraged to evaluate their own work, and responded relatively frankly and fully to questions posed by the teacher. June, for example, in evaluating her 'Dossier' unit wrote:

Evaluation

1). Yes I do think ~~that~~ that this unit has improved my english.
2. I think that I enjoyed all of the unit, I don't think I enjoyed just one part.
3. I enjoyed every part I think it was a fun project (different).
4. Yes I could have done the map of the shopping centre better.
5. Because its something different from the other units. We have had to work on our own and find information by ourselves etc. Other units we've had to do work from the board. Were using our own ideas on paper.
6. Because its taught me to put my own ideas to use. Thank you for these learnt sophis

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In Science, the students' written work was checked formally only once during the observational period. Lab books were handed in when the unit on 'Types of Matter' was completed, and the teacher either ticked sections of work to indicate the completion of blocks of content, or wrote brief comments such as: 'Good', 'Really?' (where a student observation of an experiment was obviously incorrect), 'Try and finish the ... experiment', 'Some bits are missing', and so on. Spelling errors were not corrected, even though many were from copied material (words such as crystal, particle, compound, physical, substance, ammonium, nucleus, oxygen, filings, dissolved, hydrochloric, sulphur and diluted). Inaccurate observations in notes on experiments also went unremarked.

On one occasion, an assignment, 'My Element', was given for weekend homework. Students had to locate information about an element and to complete various sections of a prepared worksheet. For example, see next page.

The next Science period, some of those students who had completed the assignment were asked to read out the information they had been able to gather to the class. After the teacher and some class members had commented on aspects of the oral presentation, the completed sheets were pinned up around the laboratory, though in an unmodified form, for other students to read.

Also, when the teachers circulated among the students, attention was given to explaining what the pupils had to do, not what they had actually written, although general comments on layout and presentation were sometimes directed at individuals.

In Social/Economic Studies, exercise books were taken in twice for marking, once by each teacher. Again, single or double ticks were used to indicate completion of blocks of content and a global comment was provided at the end of the unit, such as 'Fine', 'Excellent', 'Well done', or comments on comprehensiveness or presentation such as 'Could you finish the next bit?', 'You've made an effort to tidy up your work - good'. Matters of sentence structure, expression, spelling, paragraphing, adequacy of notetaking and summarizing, were not commented on during lessons and rarely received attention when work was being

My Element:

NAME:

NUMBER:

CHEMICAL SYMBOL:

PHYSICAL PROPERTIES:

What state we find it in.

What it looks like

Anything else?

CHEMICAL PROPERTIES:

Does it form lots of compounds, (is it reactive) or not (inert)

(If you know a compound, write it down).

(Remember we only find many elements in chemical combination as compounds. For example, you will probably never have seen Sodium but you will all have seen and used one of its compounds Sodium chloride [chemical symbol NaCl] which is salt.

WHAT IS IT USED FOR:

(You will find some information in your book on Pg 162, 163, 164 and 166).

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evaluated formally. As for written work in Science, it appeared that these particular aspects of students' written work were not of prime concern for the Social/Economic Studies teachers and did not appear to be incorporated in their informal or formal evaluation strategies.

One of the Social/Economic Studies teachers encouraged self-evaluation, and when the unit on 'Pacific Islanders' had been completed allowed students to make assessments of their written and oral work, attitudes, and classroom behaviour, and to make comments about specific aspects of the unit, and the unit as a whole. The teacher responded in writing to the students' feedback. For example, see next page.

In each of the subject-areas, both during the time students were writing and when formal evaluation of written work was made on the completion of units, the teachers employed a variety of strategies. They ranged from no obvious guidance or checks on what was being written, or on how students were coping with written activities during lessons, to specific suggestions for improvement in presentation and structure; from a single mark, comment or tick to extended comments on specific features of a student's effort as guidance for future improvement.

It was also observed that where written comments were provided to students on their work, there appeared to be no systematic follow-up by teachers to check that the specific features receiving comment had been modified later, or that the advice provided was heeded. Students themselves, however, indicated that they *did* read what teachers had written on their work and generally resolved to try and improve their writing in future by following the teachers' suggestions.

II Profiles of the Case Study Pupils

Pupil One: Irene

Irene enjoyed writing, even though she found it the most difficult of all language activities. In fact, she could frequently be found writing when she should have been listening! Once settled to a writing task which, on occasion, took some time depending on her mood and distractability, she wrote intensively

Fill in this as well as you can. Collect all your unit work, together, in order (numbered) and staple together with this sheet on the outside.

① Give yourself a number (1 = the best - 5 = lowest) for three things during this unit.

- My effort (tried hard or not) [3]
- My behaviour [3]
- Joining discussions [2]
- Folder work [3]

② I think I deserve a A B C D E for this unit because --- 1 2 3 4 5 Yes ✓✓

I Tryed to do my almost best and I joined in with the discussions and talks we had. I also tryed to do neat folder work. / Coach

③ What did you like most of all about this unit, and WHY I like the talks because we didn't have to write anything and we learnt more from the people I like listen there.

④ What was it that you didn't like, and why? I can't think of anything I didn't like.

⑤ What activities would you like to do more of during the next unit? (what activites do you enjoy?) I wouldn't like to do more talking activities because I enjoy hearing other peoples opinions

⑥ What main things do you think you learned during this unit? What it's like to live in another country and how they get along without machine and things.

⑦ Make any other comments on the back, about this unit, suggestions, hints, ideas.

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in short bursts, producing a large amount of work. In this class, Irene would be considered one of the most prolific writers: during a normal class period, she could produce two pages or more with ease.

She seldom produced drafts and worked straight into her books. Although she maintained that for longer, 'more important' pieces, she drafted her writing first and edited it, during the period observed she attempted this only twice. She did, however, invite others to read what she had written. One pupil (possibly the most capable in the class) in the next group was often asked to read her work because, as Irene observed, 'He's pretty good'. Less frequently, two other girls who sat in her English group were given Irene's work to read.

Irene's use of language is confident and her vocabulary extensive. After writing for some time she would re-read her work for sense and accuracy, but alterations were seldom needed. Where these were required she crossed out and re-wrote, went over letters to correct spelling mistakes, or inserted words. The following excerpt from the 'Kidnapper's Profile' section of her 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' is typical:

Maths: Finishes work quickly but can easily be distracted away from the thought of math.
Sport: Won't really get a interest in any type of sport, often prefers to watch than actually participate.
Art: Generally good behaviour and produces original work. Can be quick to criticize others opinions and likes.
Behaviour: Martin behaves well when he wants to, but occasionally plays around when something doesn't interest him.
Comments: Martin is working on a very high level of work & is progressing steadily. He is starting to rebel when a situation doesn't suit him.

Secondary teachers report.

Maths: Achieving a great amount of success in this subject. He is continueing to progress. A1
Science: Martin enjoys this subject considerably but his attitude towards other people is often very hostile when he is in a mood. B2

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Her superior ability in the language area is indicated by her Progress Card ratings: Oral 3, Written 1, Reading 1. No PAT scores were provided by the intermediate school she attended. It might also be noted that the Oral ratings probably did not reflect her grasp of language using the criterion for the E19/22, but rather her speech which seemed to be almost calculatedly casual.

When composing, particularly more creative pieces, Irene's pen raced. There were seldom pauses to gather new thoughts or to check what had been written: large chunks were committed to the page before any re-reading was done. In other forms of writing, her thoughts were expressed in complete sentences, and several sentence types were used for different effects. For example, Irene took rather more time than usual in composing her letter to 'Youth Focus'. She also consulted more widely on the line of argument that she wanted to pursue and tried it out on both the teacher and the observer. For this unit, a draft was required by the teacher, so Irene was compelled to re-work her first effort. Her final version was published in the *Evening Post*.

Letters to Youth Focus

Third formers in class [redacted] have their say on a range of topics.

Give music a chance

IT IS quite rude how most adults run down teenagers' music. They say things like, "In my day you could understand the words." Maybe this is a fact but they say it in a very sarcastic manner. I get sick and tired of this type of remark.

Reggae, punk, rock, new wave and the like all have rhythm, beat and all the other ingredients which are necessary for music or a tune. Of course the music is different to 30 years ago. In a way it is almost a tradition to have adults and parents dislike teenagers' music. I distinctly remember my mum saying, "My father never did like rock 'n roll."

I wish some people would give our music half a chance and actually sit down and listen to the music of the '80s; some of the tunes are quite catching!

[redacted]

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Irene experienced some difficulty in paragraphing correctly. Although she obviously understood the purpose of paragraphs, she thought that she had not been taught how to use them in any formal way by previous teachers. She recognized that her spelling and punctuation could be improved but she seldom used a dictionary, although she certainly knew how to. Frequently, she wrote a word in several ways on a scrap of paper and chose the one 'that looked right', or checked with other members of her group. It seemed that peer pressure deterred most students, including Irene, from going up to the teacher's desk to use the dictionary. Hence, mistakes such as: 'independant', 'necesserily', 'ectasy', 'itineray', 'appropiate', 'acqua-blue', appeared from time to time in her written work. But, on most occasions, her work was error-free.

Irene wrote quickly, using a neat, print-style script (though switching from one style of 'a' to another), or a cursive style in her exercise books:

Last night at 7:30pm on channel 2, I watched Our World. The programme was about Western Australias famous orchids. Some of the narration was too complexed for me to understand. I did find out that the flowers have some kind of chemical message. Using this they have some how outwitted certain facts to their advantage. I also saw an orchid that grew underground and different types of venus fly traps.

"Red, red wine", UB40, "Where ever I lay my hat", Paul Young, "Someone, somewhere in Summertime", "Simple minds, White wedding", Billy Idol, "100" Freeze, "Why did you love me." "Coconuts" and "Double Dutch", Malcolm McLaren. All of these songs are mixed. They are made up of, funk, rock, new-wave, reggae and the likes.

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Both styles were used, even for rough working on scrap paper. She appeared to switch from one to the other for no apparent reason, sometimes changing within the same lesson.

Although all her teachers placed considerable emphasis on the presentation and layout of written work, Irene spent little time on illustrating and decorating her writing or in producing elaborate headings. These were seldom more than capital letters or largesize writing done in felt-tip pen and underlined with a wavy line. She considered that she could not draw well and often asked a talented young artist friend to do her drawings for her.

Maps, diagrams and charts in Social/Economic Studies and Science were very small and neat with accurate labels. Irene spent little time on them, however, as she preferred to put her effort into the writing itself.

For the written work assessed during the observational period, Irene received comments and marks commensurate with her superior ability. In evaluating her 32-page 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier', her English teacher wrote: 'Meticulously presented', 'Very comprehensive - many teachers would wish they could use comments as constructive as yours (in role-playing a teacher writing school reports)', 'Superb vocabulary and language competence'.

Pupil Two: James

James was described by his present teachers as 'very average'. The ratings from his Progress Card certainly bore out this assessment: he received a 3 for all subject-areas and a C for each personality characteristic. His PAT results for 1982 revealed a different pattern, however. *PAT: Reading Comprehension* 23rd percentile, *PAT: Listening Comprehension* 92nd percentile (this seemed unusually high, given his other standardized test results and previous achievement record), *PAT: Reading Vocabulary* 32nd percentile and *PAT: Mathematics* 37th percentile. The general picture from these data, with the exception of the listening comprehension test, is one of a low-average to below-average student.

In observing James at work, the prevailing impression was

one of casualness and lack of care. He appeared to do as little as possible without drawing undue teacher attention to himself, and seldom contributed to lessons unless called upon directly. However, during the six weeks of observation his passion for computers stimulated him to read about them and to write letters to firms in both New Zealand and Australia requesting information about programs. In oral work, once he had decided to become involved, he revealed a sharp wit, and to a degree this was also displayed in flashes in his writing.

When the class had been directed to write for a sustained period of time James rarely began with the others. He appeared to postpone writing until he could no longer avoid doing something. For one intensive 10-minute observational period during English, while the class was compiling parts of the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier', James talked with his neighbours, fiddled with his pencil case, read some brief instructions, chewed his pen, sighed over the blank page while tapping his chair with his pen, and wrote nothing at all. Such behaviour sequences were relatively common.

James's written work showed evidence of satisfactory content, and some grasp of the fundamentals of writing of the type required by his teachers. His writing, however, contained plenty of mistakes, even when the material was being copied. On one occasion, James was observed to be struggling with a word he wished to use, but had doubts about its spelling. He wrote 'afences' for 'offences'. Rather than use a dictionary, he chose a near synonym, 'crimes', that lacked the precision in this context of the original word. When queried by the observer, he remarked that he 'couldn't be bothered with a dictionary, it took too much time', and the alternative word was 'just as good, anyway'. The following extract from his Social/Economic Studies exercise book is typical. The assignment required a summary of sections of a textbook:

Towards Apartheid

Ever since 1910 the Blacks and whites in south Africa have been fighting over one thing or another. The Big factories, mines, etc in south afenca. have mainly Black imployes and the Whites got afraid that the Blacks might take a strike for more money and since there the only people that went to work there. they would get the money. In 1948 the Black Nationalist party got in and made laws that the Whites get there own laws and Black get there own. The whites got more than the Blacks. How Did it make me feel. It made me feel

---

And here is a sample of work copied from an overhead transparency in Science:

Chemistry is the study of substances.
their they are the Physical properties.
How the behave or react - Chemical properties.
To find out about a substance we need
to get it by itself, we need a pure substance
Most substance in everyday life are combined
mixed with other substances in mixtures

James did not use rough drafts and seldom re-read what he had written. When he did check his work and decided to alter what he had recorded, his changes were made by roughly crossing out. His untidy handwriting also contributed to the overall impression of hastily compiled work.

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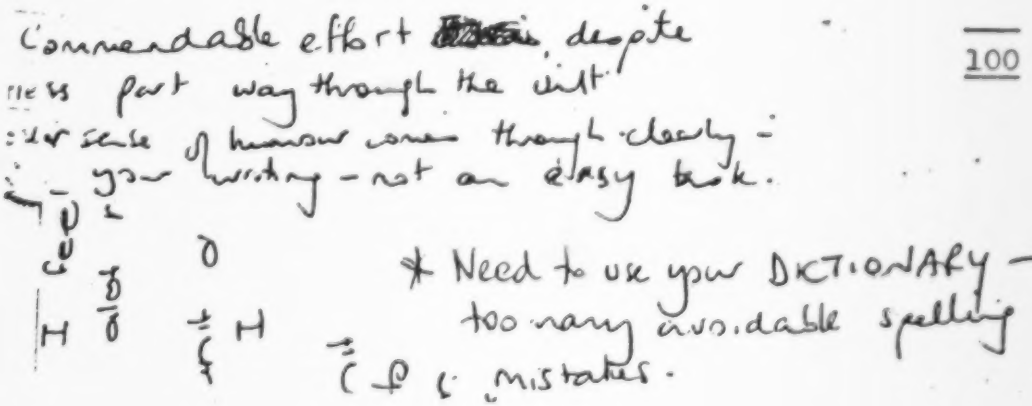
Punctuation was used haphazardly in James's writing. Apostrophes were usually used incorrectly, question marks were omitted (even from work copied from the board or an overhead transparency), commas were rarely employed and letters were sometimes capitalized for no apparent reason. James's sentencing, however, was reasonably competent. He used a variety of sentence structures and appeared to be aware of the effects to be achieved by using short, pithy sentences in his creative writing.

His somewhat irregular journal writing was seldom more than one sentence of 3 or 4 lines, and almost always on the topic suggested by the English teacher, except when he chose to write about computers.

The teachers in the three subject-areas wrote few comments in formally evaluating James's written work. In Science, ticks were placed to indicate blocks of completed content with a word or two to remind James of some aspect, e.g., 'really?' below an inaccurate observation, and 'that all?' (sic) in one cell of a chart which also had 'good' written below it. In Social/ Economic Studies only one comment appears at the foot of a chart (which is completely illustrated, though with several grammatical and spelling errors): 'Excellent. Your grade stands James. Could you finish the next bit'.

James's 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' received a mark of 80/100 and the following comments:



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His own assessment of the unit probably accurately summarises James's feelings about writing:

The unit.

1. Do you feel this unit has improved your English in anyway. Yes I feel It has made me think things out alot more before I write it.
2). Which part of the unit did you most enjoy. The piece were I cut the News Head Page.
3). Which part of the unit did you least enjoy the Story writeing bits.
4) Which part of my english improved. My atatude to-ward project. I hate them.
5). Why was I ask to do dossier Because It was ~~zap~~ ment to improve my english which it did a bit. Thankyou.

Pupil Three: Kate

Kate was a vivacious, lively, and distractable Tokelauan girl who spent much time in class talking with other students in her seating group. She was popular with most of the class and appeared to be the acknowledged leader amongst the girls who usually sat with her in English, although she had to vie with Irene for that role in Science where the two were in the same group.

Kate's written work was always well-presented. Pages were dated, diagrams carefully labelled, headings underlined twice and ruled-off after each day's work, and the handwriting itself - a neat, large, rounded script - was as shown below:

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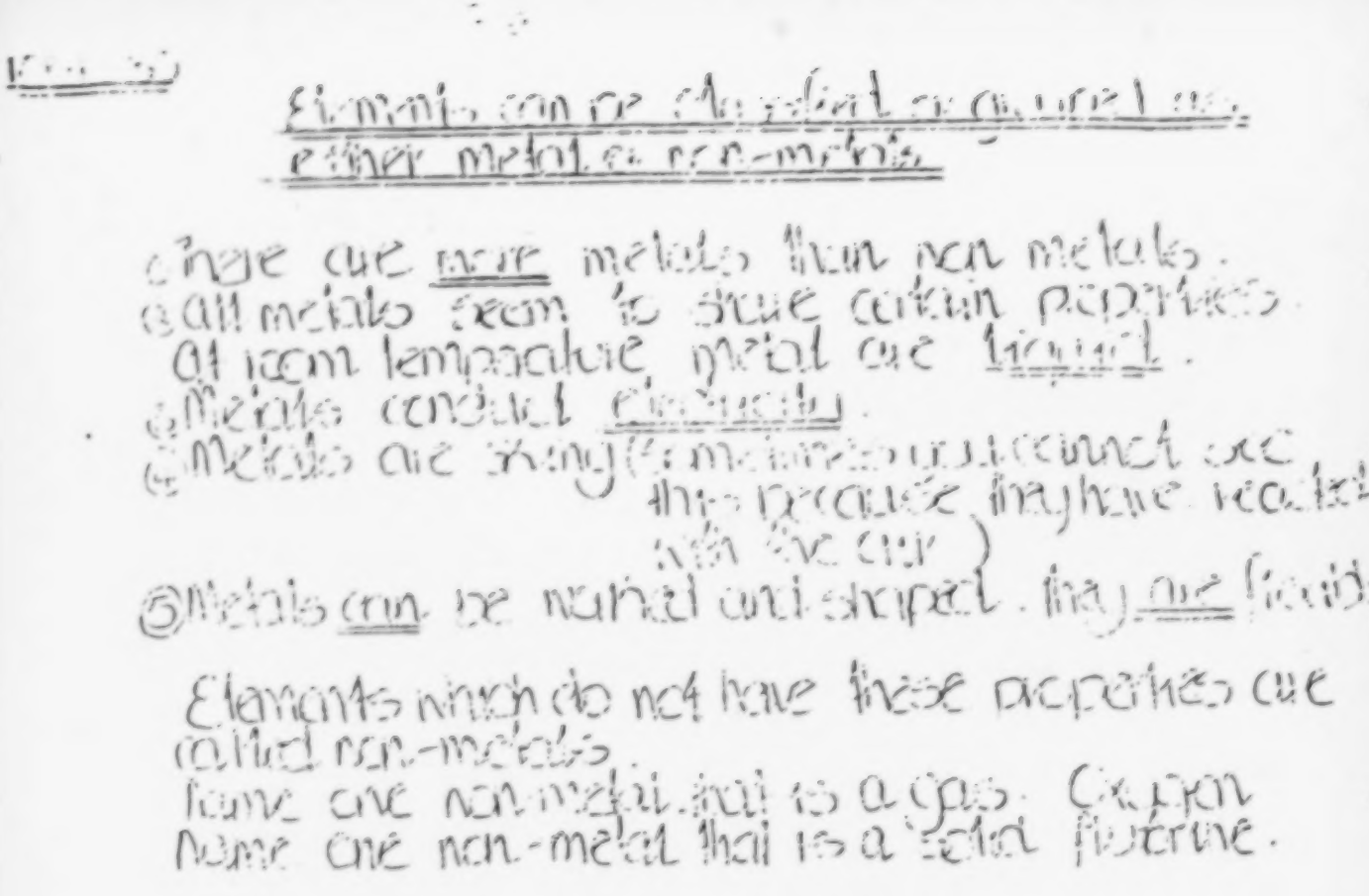
Elements can be classified as either metal or non-metal
Some are more metals than non metals.
All metals seem to share certain properties at room temperature, metal are liquid.
Metals conduct electricity.
Metals are strong (a metal bridge would not collapse because it would be too heavy)
Metals can be pulled out and shaped. they are liquid
Elements which do not have these properties are called non-metals
Some are non-metal that is a gas. Carbon Some are non-metal that is a solid Fluorine.

She produced such writing with ease and seldom had to correct words she had copied.

Kate tended to write spasmodically. Short bursts of writing about three or four lines were followed by conversation with her neighbours or, as sometimes occurred in English, reading what she had written to others in her group for their approval or comment, or reading what they had written. In a typical 10-minute period during which Kate was observed intensively, she spent more than half the time in conversation, and completed a short heading and wrote 19 words.

Kate liked writing and thought herself quite accomplished at it. She made lengthy journal entries and wrote fluently once she had settled to the task. Her 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' unit for English was 29 pages long, extremely colourful, and well-presented. However, like the other non-European students in the class, Kate had a restricted vocabulary and was still

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mastering 'standard' English (e.g., appropriate use of tense and agreement), although her grasp of these aspects was improving in the English teacher's view. Accordingly, Kate often wrote as follows:

'Find out about a substances we need ...'
'I want all of you's to work night and day ...'
'He seem friendly ...'
'We use a bunsen burner ...'
'They do this cos so the leaves will be soft'
'They lived in large settlements and ruled by a chief ...'
'There is alot of greedy men about ...'
'There wasn't much good books there ...'
'Not as much clothes ...'

Also, Kate tended to use apostrophes and quotation marks inappropriately. She informed the observer that she used 'those little dashes together when they look good' and 'because they're nice'.

Kate was aware of these problems and was determined to improve her English. Her English teacher considered that, given Kate's high level of motivation, diligence, ability and determination, she would probably succeed by the end of her secondary schooling.

Kate had no difficulty in generating ideas or finding things to write about. Much of her work was characterised by short,

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staccato, simple sentences to express quite complex ideas (unlike James, for example, who used more varied sentences).

Although she claimed to proofread her work, Kate's writing contained various mistakes, such as 'wittnesses', 'drawen', 'cheif', 'they'er', 'speacial', 'cropa' (copra), 'moe' (more) and 'compound'. Like others in the class, she did not resort to a dictionary when unsure of how to spell a word. Only three alterations were found in more than 60 pages of work collected from Kate over the six-week observational period. One rough draft only was prepared for a talk in Social/Economic Studies, so what was initially committed to paper almost invariably remained unchanged.

An understanding of appropriateness and register was indicated by Kate's comments to the researcher concerning her letter to the President of U.A.S. (one topic in the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' unit):

Obs.: *The letters were the hardest thing to do?*

K.: *Yeah.*

Obs.: *Why was that? You're used to writing letters, aren't you?*

K.: *Yeah, but this letter was to the President of U.A.S.*

Obs.: *So, what made that difficult?*

K.: *Had to use big words but I don't know what big words - I don't know what they mean. So, we had to use big words, but I didn't use big words, I just used it as I wrote it - as I wrote in my cousin's letter. You know, like: Your son's been kidnapped, we'll look for him. Not like those big words: We're sorry for your son's disappearance. I think*

Obs.: *Yes. Do you think that is the way people at that level write?*

K.: *Yeah.*

Kate's achievement in the language area had been evaluated by her previous teachers as follows: On the E19/22, Oral 2, Written 2 and Reading 3. Her college entry form, however, showed her ratings to be 3+, 3+ and 2 respectively. No results for PAT testing were entered by her intermediate school.

Except for the English teacher, little formal comment was made on Kate's work when it was submitted for evaluation. The English

teacher's comments on the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' unit were extensive and indicated aspects of Kate's work that were commendable, had improved or needed further improvement.

* Delighted to see such careful presentation. Agree: Your typing, sketches and writing are neatly and thoroughly assembled.
* You have obviously proofread your work well - few minor mistakes from your's made in previous work.
* Your ability to organise your work so that this assignment was handed in on time is pleasing too.
* Vocabulary is always for possible - you need to use more words to describe feelings rather than just 'good'. Yes, reading will improve this, but do remember to look up words you don't understand in the dictionary - then use them. Go well with the work. This way you'll gain a bigger vocabulary!

Pupil Four: Leon

Leon found writing a trial, even when he understood what he had to do and how much time was available. During an interview he made the comment: 'It's (writing) quite hard. It's boring writing. It's always been hard for me'.

When instructions were given to the class as a whole, Leon was attentive and appeared to listen to what was said by the teacher. On many occasions, however, he did not comprehend fully what was required of him. He usually asked other members

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of his group to explain further (especially James, another case-study student) and frequently waited for them to begin work; he then followed what they did, laboriously working his way through each writing task. He did not ask his teachers for help but, if asked directly by one of them, readily admitted that he didn't know precisely the nature of the task or how to tackle it.

Leon's ratings for the language area on his Progress Card for Oral, Writing and Reading were all 4s. His PAT percentile rankings were recorded as follows: *PAT: Reading Comprehension* 30th, *PAT: Reading Vocabulary* 16th, and *PAT: Listening Comprehension* 61st. His College entry form also showed that he had attended a reading clinic at his previous school.

Although intended to be a regular writing assignment, his journal writing was spasmodic. Generally he did not like the topic suggested by the teacher and responded only to sporting themes, particularly anything to do with soccer. His typical entries were brief, seldom more than two or three lines, and these were only produced after much toil. These entries for four days from 10 August to 12 September are typical:

8 8 83 Journal
I hate school because they are really boring & I don't like any of them & last year one time I went to skate away and that was pretty good.

8 15 83 Journal
In the weekend I didn't do nothing

8 16 83 Journal
going to the movies in the

9 12 83 Journal
In the August holiday I went to see two movies yesterday I heard Blue thunder they were both good

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Leon did not complete the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier'; although this unit apparently motivated many of the class to do written work superior to that produced earlier in the year, Leon was not enthused by it and only produced 122 lines of writing. The teacher assessed his work as 41/100 and commented:

* A pleasing effort
You have worked hard to
present a neat and interesting
project.

* I liked the way you set your
work out - easy also to read.

* Simple ideas used well.

Leon's work was usually neatly presented. He followed teacher directions in dating and heading his work, and underlined and ruled off when required. Unlike many other pupils in this class, Leon did not produce elaborate headings, page-border decorations or illustrations; his work is characterised by simplicity of presentation.

Leon's use of language was restricted. His vocabulary was limited, his sentencing poor, the registers used undeveloped, and his spelling inaccurate. His attempts to express himself were sincere, but frustrated by his lack of competence. From time to time he was observed to give up, and to spend the remainder of the period drawing or doodling, an activity he seemed to enjoy. This 'time off-task' was not discouraged by his teachers for they did not comment on it while he was drawing, nor when books were taken in for formal evaluation.

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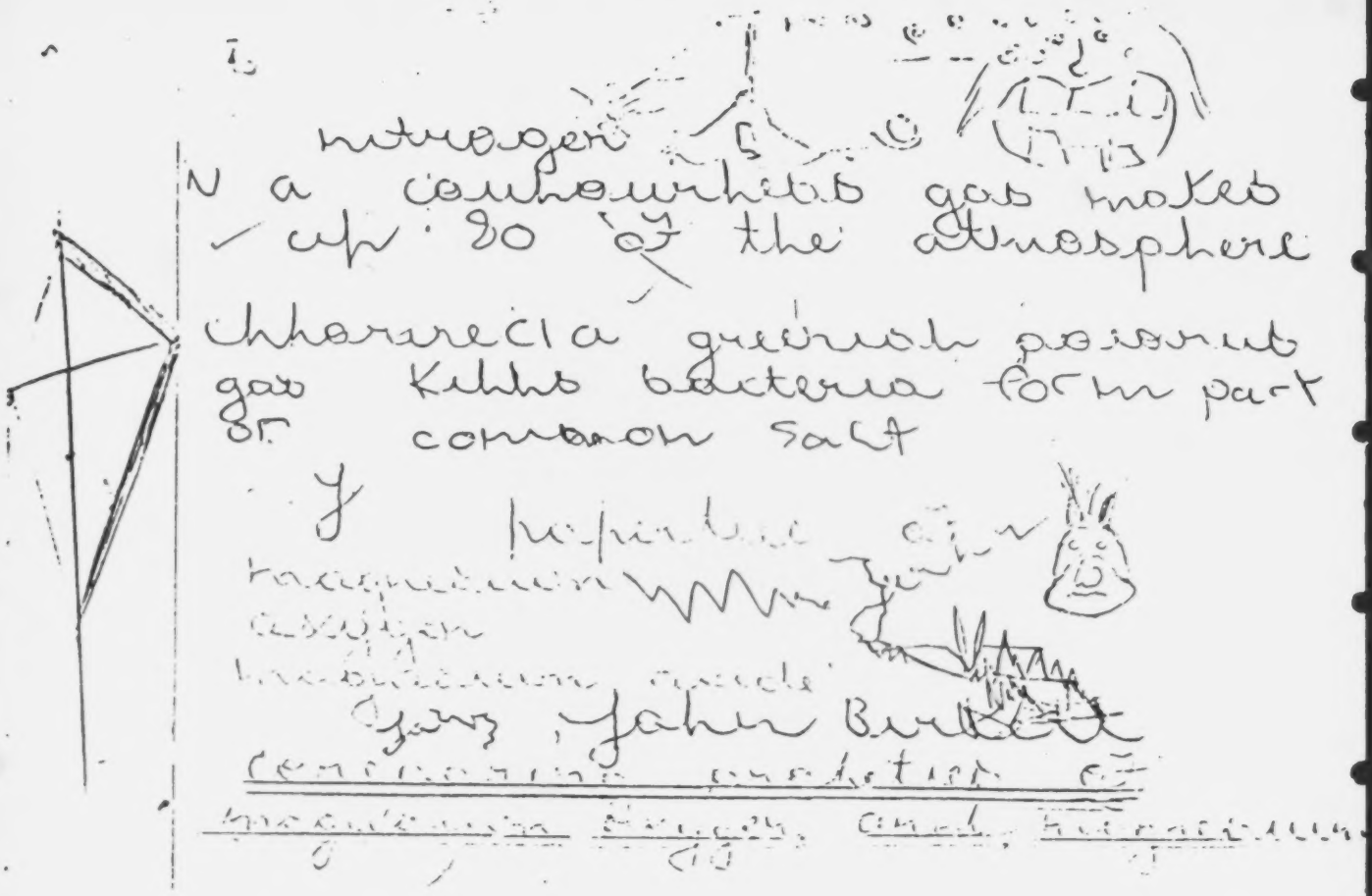
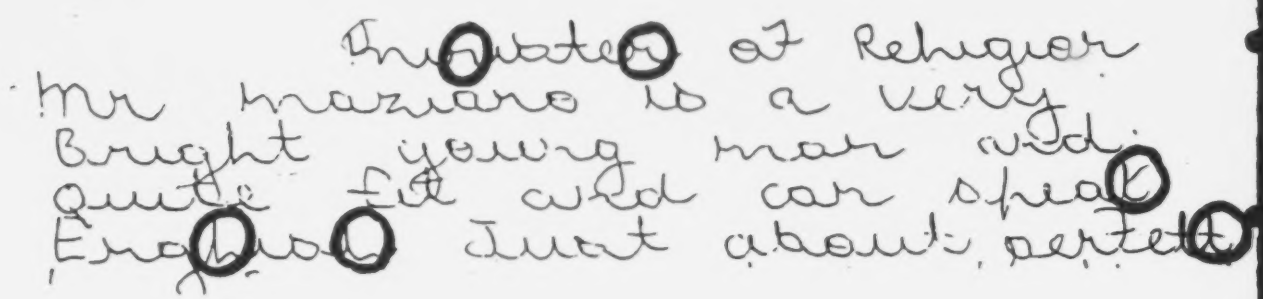


The writing style used by Leon is very difficult to read fluently, largely becuase the letters 'r' and 'n' are identical, and the 't' and 'k', and the 'l' and 'h' are very similar, e.g.,



His writing was laboriously produced with large, uniform gaps between words. When asked about his style of writing, Leon thought that he had always written that way.

Although Leon wrote slowly and his ideas and answers took a considerable time to form and to be put down on paper, he worked

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steadily at writing tasks. However, re-reading what had been written, the checking of spelling and other aspects of language use appeared not to be undertaken. Whole pages of Leon's work have no alterations: there is no crossing-out, even though a large number of spelling errors may appear on one page. Also, no punctuation is to be found in Leon's writing, apart from capital letters used occasionally to begin a sentence, even in work copied from the blackboard or an overhead transparency.

In talking at length with Leon about his writing, it was obvious that he was painfully aware of his shortcomings. He seemed demoralized and defeated by the sheer number of things he had to do to write as well as many of his peers. When asked for his reaction to his English teacher's suggestions for improvement he said:

Obs.: *... What would you normally do, where you see comments that are written by a teacher?*

L.: *I'd look at them and turn back to the - and look over my project and see if it is really what she says.*

Obs.: *What will you do about it though? Would you do anything about it?*

L.: *No.*

Obs.: *Just read it and that's it?*

L.: *Yeah. You can't really do nothing about it. She has already marked it. She can't give a second opinion.*

His teachers in other subjects had made no comments on any aspects of Leon's written work. Only one comment appeared in his Science lab book: 'Try and finish the Iron and Sulphur experiment', and he failed to hand in his Social/Economic Studies book for assessment.

7. WRITTEN WORK IN THE FORM FOUR CLASSROOM

I Writing Tasks Set

A *Activities Involving Writing*

Over the six weeks of observations, pupils chiefly wrote phrases, sentences or short paragraphs in response to questions asked by the teacher, particularly in English and Social/Economic Studies. In Science, pupils either made notes from supplied resources or described experiments. Other activities were less prominent, such as making lists, copying headings, questions or notes from the board (this applied to English, Social/Economic Studies and Science) and 'one-off' tasks such as writing a film review or an essay.

WRITING OBSERVED IN THE FORM FOUR CLASS

1. ENGLISH

(i) Copied (from blackboard or overhead transparency)
(ii) Lists
(iii) Notes (from an oral presentation)
(iv) Phrases/Sentences
(v) Paragraphs
(vi) Essays (Film Review, Book Review)

2. SOCIAL/ECONOMIC STUDIES

(i) Copied
(ii) Lists
(iii) Sentences
(iv) Paragraphs
(v) Essay

3. SCIENCE

(i) Copied
(ii) Notes
(iii) Phrases/Sentences (reporting results of experiments)
(iv) Test

1. ENGLISH

(i) Copied

Routine activities for the pupils in this class, at the start of the session, included writing the date and a heading for the day (which the teacher had usually written on the blackboard just before the beginning of the period) and, at the end of the session, noting in their logbooks the evening's homework from a little summary 'box' retained on the blackboard specifically for this purpose.

Generally, however, writing copied from the board consisted of questions which the pupils were expected to answer in writing, such as those connected with the 'Children's Books Survey: Their View of Men and Women', which were as follows:

SECTION A

(1) Title of book? (2) Author's name? (3) Type of book (e.g., fantasy, historical, adventure, factual)?

SECTION B

(1) Briefly summarise what happens in this book.
(2) Is there one main character or a number? Male or female?
(3) How many male characters appear in this book?
(4) How many female characters appear in this book?
(5) List all the activities carried out by the male characters.
(6) List all the activities carried out by the female characters.
(7) What qualities do the male/female characters appear to have (e.g., bravery, thoughtful, leadership)?

EXTENSION

Make a general summary of what you notice about the view of males/females in your book. Comment on how realistic this view is, and how young children would react to it.

In addition, there were some questions on a group of newspaper items, on 'Who Does What in Your House?' (an analysis of household activities for each family-member) and 'Can You Tell a Book by its Cover?' (a description of a gang member from a photograph).

At different times over the period observed pupils were also required to copy two charts (i.e., a series of features which could be used to describe the behaviour of characters in 'The Young Doctors', and a list of domestic tasks), a piece of verse ('What are little girls made of?') and a set of notes entitled 'Writing Essays the Easy Way!' (including a diagram illustrating the suggested structure of an expository essay).

(ii) Lists

Pupils were often required to make lists. On three occasions, the lists were simply titles or categories of some type: five (then ten) jobs which the students considered belonged to a particular sex; ten television programmes that they watched regularly; and the contents of a film review. The first list, part of the introductory session on stereotyping (this topic spanned the entire period of observations), was entitled 'That's a Woman's Job!' and was used to help initiate discussion on employment differences related to sex. The second list was included in a session devoted to 'T.V.'s View of Men and Women', while the third was incorporated in a lesson on writing a film review.

At other times, however, the lists involved groups of reasons or traits. The students were asked to jot down five things about men and women which, had they been Martians, would have struck them as strange if they had been on Earth watching television (including advertisements); on another day, when the class discussed racial discrimination, they were asked to provide in writing five reasons why they hated the 'Purples' (an imaginary group of people with major differences from the 'Greens', to whom the pupils belonged for this exercise); and, on a further occasion,

the students were asked to write down in two columns ideas for and against this statement: 'all the buses in Wellington are going to have their seats taken out from next week'.

(iii) Notes

Once, the class was required to make their own notes while listening to group leaders presenting 'findings' from small-group discussion on a set of children's books. Before the students carried out this task, however, the teacher reminded them that taking notes required careful listening to the speakers in order to select key points before they were written down. While the five group leaders presented their commentaries, most of the rest of the class made notes on these aspects (which had formed the basis of the small-group discussions):

A. *Storyline - were there any real similarities in the stories?*

B. *Characters (1) In your group how many books had mainly male, female, mixed characters?*
(2) What was the average number of male, female characters for each book in your group ?

C. *Activities (1) List the main activities carried out by the male and female characters in your books.*

D. *Qualities (1) Are there any obvious differences between the male and female characters?*

Following the presentations, discussion took place on the ways that books portray boys and girls.

(iv) Phrases and Sentences

Sometimes pupils were required to write answers consisting of one or more sentences (though sometimes just a phrase or two) in response to questions which the teacher had written on the board. These questions mostly required statements of fact, though the pupils' opinion was occasionally sought. When the pupils were examining the photographs of a gang member, for example, these questions were answered:

CAN YOU TELL A BOOK BY ITS COVER?

(1) Where does he live?
(2) What's his name?
(3) What job does he do?
(4) Briefly describe his school career.
(5) What things does he enjoy doing? (hobbies, etc.)

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(6) What things does he dislike doing?
(7) Why does he dress like this?
(8) How does he want people to think of him?
(9) Briefly summarise his typical day.
(10) What's his ambition (aim) in life?

"CAN YOU TELL A BOOK BY IT'S COVER?"

1. Where does he live?
2. What's his name?
3. What job does he do?
4. Briefly describe his school career. [illegible]
5. What things does he enjoy doing? [illegible]
6. What things does he dislike doing? [illegible]
7. Why does he dress like this? [illegible]
8. What does he want people to think of him? [illegible]
9. Briefly summarise his typical day.

Pupils were also asked to write about some newspaper items (a total of six questions) one day, and on another occasion to write answers to questions on the 'Children's Books Survey', though some of these questions required relatively brief answers and in one case a more extended plot summary (a total of ten questions).

. On two occasions pupils were asked to make jottings in response to an oral question. After the teacher had read out an advertisement on cologne, for example, the class was asked to jot down

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the image of males which the advertisement conveyed and, associated with the group leaders' presentations on the male/female activities portrayed in children's books, the class was asked to summarise very briefly typical male and female activities.

(v) Paragraphs

On a few days, pupils were required to write comments of more than one or two sentences in length. Pupils were assisted in writing these paragraph-length pieces by the teacher's practice of making relatively extensive use of the blackboard during class discussions in order to note observations and comments made by the class on the topics covered.

During one session, therefore, pupils wrote a short paragraph 'using the reasons on the board' (part of the teacher's instruction) on why some jobs are 'male' and some 'female'. On another day, the class wrote 'two summary paragraphs using the blackboard notes' on what is considered appropriate behaviour for girls and for boys, and were allowed about ten minutes to do this, after a half-hour discussion on conventional views of male and female behaviour.

Little girls are meant to be little dolly things that sit inside all day playing with their dolls. They are also meant to be sweet, innocent and ladylike and they are very protected.

Little boys are meant to be rough and are meant to climb trees get all muddy and usually they get in trouble. If they aren't like this they are teased to be called sissy and golly. Little boys aren't as protected as girls.

Later in the unit, after watching the recorded episode of 'The Young Doctors', pupils wrote 'four short paragraphs' on the male and female roles they observed (i.e., one each for jobs, activities, appearance and authority figures). Several days afterwards, pupils wrote four more paragraphs (using reasons already listed and grouped on the board) on the causes

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of racial hatred and unrest.

These writing tasks were generally used to summarise or draw together the main themes of classroom discussions on topics which were covered as part of the stereotyping unit. On the final day given to this unit, pupils were asked to write brief paragraphs evaluating what they had gained from it, including such matters as those aspects which they most or least enjoyed and topics which needed more time.

(vi) Essays (Film Review, Book Review)

On one occasion the class was asked to write a review of a film they had seen the previous day. This was not connected with the unit on stereotyping; the trip to the cinema in town was a 'reward' for winning an athletic event at their school. However, the importance of mastering different registers was implied by the teacher's comment that 'you have to learn to write in different ways for different situations, as it's getting near the end of the fourth form year'.

After jotting down aspects of the films which they considered a film review should contain, the pupils examined a list of criteria in P.R. Smart's *Process and Product* (1979: pp. 158-59). A detailed discussion ensued in which several features were selected for particular attention and, in the remaining quarter of an hour, pupils began writing the review.

The students also prepared a review of a book on sports. This piece of writing followed a set outline including such aspects as title, author, type, plot summary and main character.

2. SOCIAL/ECONOMIC STUDIES

(i) Copied

Over the weeks observed, pupils were rarely required to copy any writing, whether from the teacher's own notes or from other sources such as textbooks. On a few occasions, however, pupils copied questions which were written on the board or an overhead transparency into their exercise books, such as 'Is there poverty in N.Z. today as bad as that in John A. Lee's story?' Questions such as these arose during the course of the lesson and were simply

copied down by the pupils so that they would be able to answer them.

Very occasionally, the teacher made some jottings on the board (usually definitions) which the pupils were required to write down, such as the following:

Can people get away from their background?

heredity ... characteristics inherited from parents (genes)
upbringing ... how the individual is treated by the family
environment ... surroundings: things, people, attitudes;
happy; relaxed; tense.

On other days, notes on 'Production and Resources' and 'Paradise Island Revisited' were jotted on the board and copied by some of the pupils. The total number of words involved at any one time, however, was comparatively small (usually less than 50).

(ii) Lists

Pupils were twice required to make short lists: the first time, the class was asked to write down reasons for a mother minding her child at home, and the second time to identify examples of 'materialistic' and 'non-materialistic' things. When outlining the first task the teacher informed the pupils to 'make a quick list' and also said 'Don't bother writing it in sentences'. The second listing task preceded an attempted definition of the term 'materialist'.

(iii) Sentences

The most frequent (eleven times) types of writing carried out in this class involved the pupils in writing answers of one or more sentences in length to questions posed by the teacher. Sometimes these tasks required the pupils to give relatively straightforward descriptive or factual responses such as when they were asked to write about 'Two or three things in the story (i.e., *Children of the Poor* by John A. Lee) which show that this family was one of the poorest in the neighbourhood'. At other times the pupils' opinions were sought; for example, with reference to a photograph of a 'househusband', pupils were asked to write about whether it was 'fair to men ... or unfair?' A third type of task was to provide definitions of important terms which were used (such as upbringing, materialist, production, resources) at different

points in the two units observed, 'Changes In Social Position' and 'Production and Resources'.

Emigration-the answer to lower class poverty

① Do the cartoons indicate that changes of social class? yes they show that people who are in a lower class Emigrate to a different country are going to be better off. ✓ Nice blue pen.

② Are they realistic? No because every country has it problems. It might be better for a while but then some problems are gon going to come up. ✓

(iv) Paragraphs

More extended writing was infrequently required. On one occasion the class was asked to write a paragraph on the 'effect of family size on women's opportunities' and part of the way through the task, was reminded to 'write ideas down straight away' as 'too much time (was) spent pondering'. This task followed a more broadly orientated discussion on increased opportunities for women. See next page, for example.

And, on a different day, the class was asked to write two paragraphs on this issue: 'Does the material background of a person strongly affect what they do in later life?' Although this task had been set for homework at the end of the previous period, the teacher considered that more work on it was needed, and wrote the question on the blackboard again, though in a modified form: 'How much do the wealth and jobs of parents affect the adult lives of their children?'

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29/5/83 Effect of Family Size or Women's Opportunities.

If the family was fairly small then the women of the family could then get a job as long as the kids were old enough. But if the family was rather large (5-15) then the chances are that there are a few small kids and that the mother would have to stay home. Also the mother might be pregnant and she definately can't get a job that requires movement (that would be most jobs).

But, if the father of a large family can't earn enough money to support them then the mother might be forced to work if there aren't any older kids. There is an advantage in having an older child as he/she can look after the kids while the mother works and also help with the household jobs.

(v) Essay

At the end of the 'Changes in Social Position' unit, the pupils were asked to 'invent a New Zealand version of Tony Morelli' (a person who had figured prominently at the beginning of the unit) who would change his socio-economic status at some time in his life, and to discuss how he started and where he finished up. Once the task had been outlined, a discussion ensued during which a list of aspects which should be mentioned in the pupils' account was put on the blackboard (e.g., family, school, after school, the final product). The pupils' comments were used to build up the list although the teacher categorised them himself. Pupils were informed that they had only till the bell rang at the end of the period to finish this essay. While the pupils wrote their

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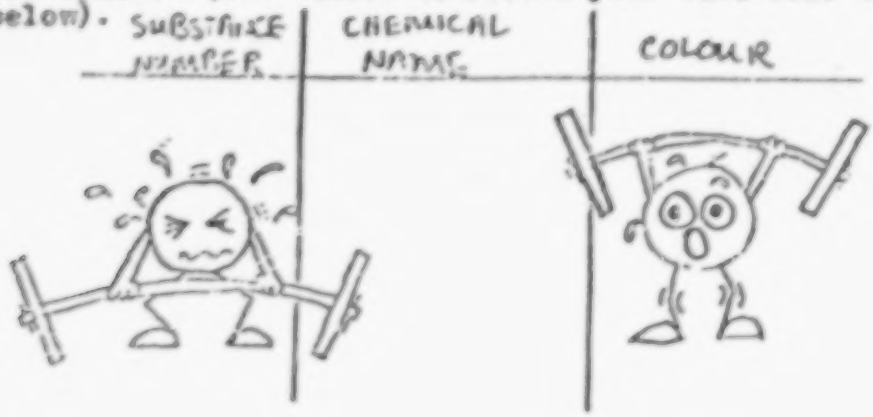
PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

During this period each group will set up a station at their desk. Each group will then move around the room and look at some of the PHYSICAL PROPERITIES of some chemicals. (Use tables to record your data like the one below).



STATION I COLOUR

In the six bottles there are different chemicals. Write down the name and formula of the chemicals then write its colour beside it.

1. Which chemical is the darkest?
2. Which chemical is the lightest?

STATION II TEXTURE

Look up the meaning of the word TEXTURE. Look at the Rocks texture can be used to describe how a thing feels. Is it rough, smooth, coarse, soft.

1. Write down the name of each rock and beside it describe its texture.
2. Then in another column write down how it is. Call the hardest Rock 7 and the Softest Rock 1 and give the others numbers inbetween. (approximatly will do).

STATION III SMELL

You have a group of chemicals in front of you write down the number of each jar. Then beside it describe the smell of each. Is it pleasant or unpleasant, or like any other smells you know.

1. How does the smell get to your nose?

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essay the teacher chatted to individuals and provided help when it was needed.

3. SCIENCE

(i) Copied

Most of the writing which pupils copied in Science was derived from questions, statements or diagrams contained in the folders used as the basis for classwork which, during the period of observations, were 'Growth and Reproduction' and 'Chemical Change'. These folders contained instructions on a range of activities, from writing definitions to carrying out experiments, and sometimes pupils were required to copy some of the writing in them (such as 'Aims') into their own exercise books. (See previous page for sample page from folder.)

Another kind of writing which pupils occasionally had to copy was written by the teacher on overhead transparencies, such as 7 or 8 lines of text on gestation times for different animals, and some new headings which the class was required to write down (e.g., 'Chemical Change' and 'List of Chemicals'). Instances such as these were rare, however.

(ii) Notes

Pupils were frequently engaged in making their own notes from the folders provided; for the first three weeks notes were made on 'Growth and Reproduction', followed by 'Chemical Change' for the remainder of the observed period. Most of the notes made were answers of one sentence in length and involved defining a term or describing a process, such as 'to understand how a cell replicates' and tended to require a mixture of copied and 'original' work from the pupils. Although they had the same resource materials, the pupils themselves decided how much detail to include in their notes, provided they adhered to the given format.

Science writing: a mixture of copied notes and answers to questions from experiments.

In this section we find ways to tell when a Chemical Reaction has taken place. In each Chemical Reaction there is a Chemical Change. And Chemical Changes are due to the Chemical properties of certain substances.

Activity 1 $BaCl_2$ + $CuSO_4$ Crystals

Put 5 or 6 crystals of barium chloride into a clean dry, small test tube. Put the same ~~as~~ number of copper sulphate crystals into anther test tube.

① Describe the solid barium chloride. Small, white crystals, which ~~to~~ look like powder.

② Describe the solid copper sulphate. Small, blue crystals which stuck together.

(iii) Phrases and Sentences

The second unit observed, 'Chemical Change', required pupils to carry out experiments and to write down the results obtained. As with the notes they made, however, the pupils themselves decided how much information to include and, in writing about the experiments, tended to rely on the information contained in their unit folders. These notes largely consisted of one or two sentence length responses to questions contained in the folders. The teacher left pupils to work on their own apart from answering queries about the experiments, though paid some attention to the setting out of tables.

(iv) Test

The pupils also sat a test at the conclusion of the 'Growth and Reproduction' unit which required a mixture of written responses ranging from single words to a paragraph in length.

B *Was There a Typical Week's Written Work?*

In each of the subject-areas covered, some written work was normally required every day. Consequently, in any given week, pupils were most commonly asked to write several short pieces, of one or more sentences or paragraphs in length, as answers to specific questions raised by their teachers during the course of the lesson, and to make their own notes following carefully set-out guidelines. Most of the writing required, therefore, was comparatively brief, factually-orientated and served as answers to specific questions. Copied writing (including questions and headings) occurred less frequently, though still on a weekly basis.

In English, pupils were typically asked to jot down their comments on an issue discussed by the whole class, sometimes with the help of notes on the blackboard, or to provide answers to a list of questions related to the day's topic. Less often, paragraph-length summaries were also required, though the total time allowed for these tasks was about the same as that given to sentence-length responses. In Social/Economic Studies, the pupils were often asked to write their views on a question in one or two sentences using information covered in discussion or, more frequently, provided in a resource book. And in Science the whole class spent most of its time making notes based on questions, diagrams and explanatory comment contained in thematic folders, or from their own observations made while carrying out experiments (which were also outlined in the folders).

The writing carried out in these three subjects was chiefly of an 'informative' or descriptive nature, and rarely over a couple of paragraphs in length. Extended writing, consisting of several paragraphs, *was* observed but not on a weekly basis. 'Imaginative' writing was not observed during the period covered by this study. However, pupils were free to include their own content in most writing tasks, provided it was relevant to the questions set and conformed more or less to the amount required by the teacher.

C *Time Given to Written Work*

As with the intermediate level study, and the third form class observed, accurate figures denoting the precise amount of time allowed for writing activities (including prior discussion and

feedback) are hard to establish. Often, for example, in English and in Social/Economic Studies the pupils were asked to write sentences or paragraphs summarising the content of a discussion which, in some cases, may have taken the best part of a single period to conduct. It seemed unreasonable to include the 'discussion time' in the time allowed for writing. Consequently, the estimates presented in the accompanying tables refer only to the length of time that was taken for a task to be explained to the pupils and how long the teacher allowed the pupils to carry out that task. Feedback-time has also been excluded from these tallies (*but see Evaluation of the Pupils' Written Work*).

Altogether, the fourth form class was observed for 46 periods, most of which lasted for an hour. The total time involved was 2690 minutes, divided as follows: English, 1115; Social/Economic Studies, 925; Science, 650. The differences are partly accounted for by the greater number of sessions allotted to English in the school's timetable (4 per week) compared to Social/Economic Studies and Science (3 each per week), and the fewer Science periods attended due to some unavoidable commitments for the observer which coincided with observation times scheduled for the Science class.

TABLE 7: *Time allowed for observed types of writing (English, Social/Economic Studies and Science combined) (Form 4)*

	WEEK						Total Minutes	%
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Copied	11	28	20	8	21	7	95	*8.9*
Lists	5	-	16	4	26	-	51	*4.8*
Notes (oral)	-	14	-	-	-	-	14	*1.3*
Notes (folder)	50	-	101	-	24	-	175	*16.4*
Phrases/Sentences	49	67	21	57	3	27	224	*20.9*
Sentences (Expts.)	-	-	-	30	95	90	215	*20.2*
Paragraphs	27	51	35	-	36	55	204	*19.1*
Test	-	-	-	50	-	-	50	*4.7*
Film Review	-	-	-	12	-	-	12	*1.1*
Essay	-	-	-	-	30	-	30	*2.8*
Total	142	160	193	161	235	179	1070	

As can be seen from an inspection of this table, the pupils spent most of their time writing sentence length responses (41%), followed by paragraphs (19%) and notes using supplied folders (nearly 16½%). Less than 10 percent of the pupils' time entailed copied writing (although this figure may be an underestimate, as much of the writing done in Science required the pupils to copy sections from the resource folders), while each of the more specialised tasks took very small proportions of the total time allowed for written work. Variations from subject to subject are included in the following tables:

TABLE 8: *Time given to different types of writing in English (Form 4)*

	WEEK							
	1*	2	3	4*	5	6	Total Minutes	%
Copied	9	26	9	2	13	-	59	*15.9*
Lists	5	-	9	4	17	-	35	*9.4*
Notes (oral)	-	14	-	-	-	-	14	*3.8*
Phrases/Sentences	20	44	-	10	-	55	129	*34.8*
Paragraphs	27	40	35	-	20	-	122	*32.3*
Film Review	-	-	-	12	-	-	12	*3.2*
Total	61	124	53	28	50	55	371	

* 3 periods only observed

TABLE 9: *Time given to different types of writing in Social/Economic Studies (Form 4)*

	WEEK							
	1*	2	3	4	5	6*	Total Minutes	%
Copied	2	2	2	3	-	7	16	*6.7*
Lists	-	-	7	-	9	-	16	*6.7*
Sentences	29	23	21	47	3	27	150	*62.8*
Paragraphs	-	11	-	-	16	-	27	*11.3*
Essay	-	-	-	-	30	-	30	*12.6*
Total	31	36	30	50	58	34	239	

* 2 periods only observed

TABLE 10: *Time given to different types of writing in Science (Form 4)*

	WEEK						Total Minutes	%
	1*	2†	3	4	5	6z		
Copied	-	-	9	3	8	-	20	4.3
Notes (folder)	50	-	101	-	24	-	175	38.0
Sentences (Expts.)	-	-	-	30	95	90	215	46.7
Test	-	-	-	50	-	-	50	10.9
Total	50	-	110	83	127	90	460	

* 1 period only observed
† No periods observed
z 2-period week (Labour Day Monday)

In English (Table 8), almost the same amount of time was spent on writing sentence-length answers to questions set by the teacher as was given to paragraph-length summaries of topics discussed in class (i.e., approximately one-third each of the total time allowed for written work). Copied writing took up about one-sixth of the time, and lists just under one-tenth. The two 'one-off' writing tasks together occupied about 7 percent of the time given to writing.

In Social/Economic Studies (Table 9), the pattern was rather different. Nearly two-thirds of the time allowed for written work was given to sentence-length responses, and slightly more than one-tenth to paragraph-length tasks. The one essay pupils were asked to write took up nearly an eighth of the time permitted for written work over the whole period observed, while copied writing and list-making occupied considerably less of the pupils' time proportionately than in English.

Writing tasks in Science (Table 10) were less varied than in either English or Social/Economic Studies. Sentence-length comments on experiments took more time than any other writing activity, followed by notes based on the questions in the folders (over a third of the total time). Copied writing (i.e., from the teacher's notes) took up a very small proportion of the class's writing time but it was very difficult to put a precise figure on all kinds of copied writing as many of the notes made by the pupils may have been copied, either directly or in a slightly amended form, from

their folders.

On average, the proportion of time allowed for written work across all subjects observed was approximately 40 percent; although there were considerable variations from subject to subject. Note that these estimates are coarse indications only:

Science	70.8%
English	33.3%
Social/Economic Studies	25.8%

In other words, in terms of the total *time spent* on written work over the duration of the study, when the pupils were taking Science they were more likely to be engaged in a writing-related activity than in the other two subjects.

These percentages would also seem to suggest that more words were produced in Science than in the other two subjects, and this was certainly true for some of the pupils. However, the figure for Science in particular could well be slightly inflated as it proved virtually impossible to separate actual writing time from related activities in Science. While pupils were carrying out their experiments they rarely spent their whole time writing, as much of their activity involved setting up experiments and discussing them with other members of their group, though some pupils spent far more time writing than others did.

D *Organizing the Class for Writing Activities*

Every time the pupils attended a particular subject they were expected to sit in the same place, although there were a few deviations from this practice. In English and Social/Economic Studies, the desks were arranged in rows, while in Science the pupils sat at work benches. In almost all instances when writing tasks were outlined, the teacher (irrespective of subject) addressed the whole class at their desks or work benches. No groups received instruction which differed from the rest of the class and, apart from the occasional exception of Science, all pupils worked on the same tasks at the same time. Also, unobtrusive discussion of written work among neighbours was usually condoned by the teachers.

In English, perhaps because of the size of the room, the desks were so arranged that pupils had a comparatively large

open space around them, and could only converse quietly about their writing with their immediate neighbours. Tasks which the pupils had to complete were usually written on the blackboard by the teacher before the class arrived and, once pupils entered the classroom and sat at their desks, were duly noted by the pupils on their loose sheets of paper (which were stored in a folder). On other occasions discussion preceded written work, such as when summary paragraphs were required.

In Social/Economic Studies, the desks were arranged in pairs in a classroom considerably smaller than the English one, which facilitated communication among the pupils. Generally, written work required arose from the points discussed in the session, and the questions to be answered were written on the blackboard by the teacher. Pupils wrote their comments and notes in exercise books.

Writing in Science followed a different pattern. Firstly, pupils were organized into groups of four or five who sat together around the outer edge of the classroom at formica-topped benches with basins and gas outlets. Consequently, because of the collaborative nature of much of their activity, such as when experiments were carried out, the pupils discussed some aspects of their written work more intensively than in the other two subjects. Secondly, once the folders and ancillary materials for a specific unit had been handed out, the pupils worked at different speeds depending upon the group they were in. Occasionally, the whole class was addressed on a topic by the teacher; otherwise, the pupils themselves decided how much writing they were going to do (i.e., how many questions to answer and how much detail to include). All written work was done in exercise books.

E *The Teachers' Actions During Class Writing Activities*

In all the subjects observed, the teachers - after explaining the requirements of tasks involving writing - left pupils to themselves to carry out the necessary work. However, in general, all three teachers were willing to respond to queries from individual pupils about their written work while the class as a whole was actually engaged in writing. Tasks set by each teacher were always

presented to the class as a whole; although in English pupils occasionally worked in groups (usually self-selected), these groups did not receive separate instruction, and neither did the permanent groups in Science. Naturally, however, clarification of tasks in these circumstances often involved members of one group only.

When the pupils were writing and no queries were raised, the teachers' behaviour differed from subject to subject. In English, for example, the teacher rarely examined what the pupils were writing. However, in order to reinforce the need for silence he would walk about the room on tip-toes in order to reduce his own noise level. If pupils themselves began to talk too much or became restless, gentle warnings were quickly issued such as 'Settle, please', or reminders given about the time left for completion of the task. Often he would write on the board useful phrases for the writing already in train or material which was going to be used later in the lesson. More rarely, the teacher worked at the desk in the front of the room if pupils were engaged on a task requiring more than a few minutes' effort.

The Social/Economic Studies teacher, however, spent considerable time checking over pupils' written work, particularly if a task had been set for homework, or in making comments about how a particular question could be answered. He left the class to work by themselves on several occasions, usually withdrawing to the adjacent resource-room in order to search for materials needed for a subsequent phase of the lesson. As a result, pupils often carried on with tasks beyond the initial time limit set by the teacher, simply because he was still busy looking at pupils' work or gathering resources next door. Occasionally a remark was tendered for the benefit of the class as a whole, such as: 'Some good ideas are being put down'. Disciplinary remarks were relatively infrequent. Writing on the blackboard was usually carried out during discussion, not while the class was itself writing.

Perhaps because of the sheer amount of time pupils were required to spend writing answers to questions in their booklets, the Science teacher tended to interact with the class less frequently than either of the other teachers, both when the pupils

were actually writing and in preparing the class for a writing task. Once they had resumed their notetaking he frequently sat at the teacher's desk, at the front of the room, where he marked work from senior classes or compiled reports. When necessary, he also answered queries from the pupils and issued warnings about the level of noise, or the amount of work pupils still had to complete. Probably because the folders issued to the pupils were largely self-explanatory the Science teacher wrote less on the board (or overhead transparencies, which were also used) than the other two teachers. And sometimes, while the pupils continued making notes, he left the classroom in order to obtain chemicals or other equipment required for experiments later in the period.

None of the three teachers appeared to make regular daily checks on the amount or the quality of writing carried out, and pupils were not required to rewrite what they had done because it was unsatisfactory or incorrect. As a result, perhaps, pupils fluctuated markedly from day to day in the amount of writing they completed as individuals and rarely proofread their writing.

F *Teachers' Strategies for Pupils with Writing Difficulties*

To begin with, there appeared to be very few pupils in this class who experienced severe problems with any aspect of writing. One boy was a chronically poor speller, while another - who had spina bifida - found the physical aspects of handwriting difficult. Both pupils were given assistance when it was requested, but were otherwise left largely to their own devices. On one occasion in English, for example, the student with spelling difficulties asked if he could make brief notes using a set of headings provided by the teacher while the rest of the class composed summary paragraphs using the same headings, and he was allowed to do this.

One other boy continually neglected to bring his exercise books to school and, on numerous occasions, made notes or wrote answers to questions on scraps of paper which he borrowed from other pupils and frequently disposed of at the end of the period. He was reminded several times by the Science and Social/Economic Studies teachers to make an effort to bring the appropriate materials to class, and was more often successful in doing so towards the end of the period observed.

In broad ability terms, the class was considered by the teachers to be of 'average to good' standard, although for the group as a whole the PAT scores in each case for Reading Comprehension, Reading Vocabulary and Listening Comprehension ranged from below the 10th to over the 90th percentile. Apart from the cases cited, no pupils were viewed as requiring special attention when written work was being carried out. As a consequence, perhaps, no specific teaching strategies were observed for pupils who might have found some writing tasks difficult at times. Instead, considerable emphasis was placed on engendering and maintaining a 'warm climate' in the classroom which ensured that almost all writing efforts by the pupils, regardless of their quality or any difficulties encountered, were accepted by the teachers.

In Social/Economic Studies, pupils were occasionally reminded of the need to follow the rules for presentation of written work which had been set out at the beginning of the year in the front of their exercise books, to practice writing in complete sentences and to read over their written work once it was finished. Also, when examining pupils' work the teacher sometimes suggested possible improvements. However, neither the English nor the Science teacher made such reminders in the normal course of lessons. All three teachers, however, willingly assisted any pupil who was unsure of the requirements of a particular task or who requested assistance of any kind, though such requests were relatively infrequent in each of the observed subject-areas.

G *Evaluation of the Pupils' Written Work*

On a daily and weekly basis no written work was formally assessed in the English class. Instead, once the unit on stereotyping was finished, pupils were required to hand in their folders containing all the writing they had done during the course of the unit. An overall grade from A to E (lowest) was then assigned for achievement and a numeral from 1 to 5 (lowest) awarded for effort, e.g., B+/2. Individual pieces of writing were not assigned marks of any kind. In addition, according to the English teacher, not everything included in the pupils' folders was taken into account in arriving at a mark. Notes taken down during discussion or answers to questions written on the board

and posed as brief in-class exercises were excluded, though their presence was acknowledged with a tick. Instead, selected pieces of writing incorporating the pupils' own ideas and opinions were examined in order to decide whether a high or low mark should be awarded.

Typically, pupils also received a comment with the 'marks', though these were usually no longer than a brief sentence or two (e.g., 'C-/3. There appears to be quite a bit of work either unfinished, or not included here'; 'C+/2. You've obviously put a lot of effort into this unit. Well done!'). Also, brief comments were made in reference to specific sections of written work, e.g., 'Good summary', 'Some very thoughtful and perceptive comments'. Occasionally, spelling mistakes would be underlined or corrected, with the symbol 'sp' placed alongside in the margin, though no attempt was made to correct all such errors. Ticks were regularly used throughout the pupils' efforts. In the teacher's own words, 'I regard proofreading as important, but don't stress it. I do indicate where errors are, but I don't correct them'. This latter comment proved not to be wholly accurate in practice, however, as a few spelling mistakes were corrected.

In Social/Economic Studies, the pupils' exercise books were gathered in twice over the six weeks, and similar kinds of assessment were made on each occasion with a grade for achievement and a numeral for effort being assigned. Sometimes these marks were accompanied by a comment (e.g., 'B+/2. I am impressed by the detail of your answers. You are giving serious thought to the work', and 'C/3. Tidy this up. Read instructions given at beginning of year'). In addition, ticks were sprinkled throughout the pupils' writing, occasional brief annotations were made (such as 'very detailed', 'excellent', 'good ideas here') and some spelling mistakes were corrected.

According to the Social/Economic Studies teacher, 'every now and then - perhaps once a month - I feel a need to look at the pupils' books, to flick through a few pages to see what they're doing'. His primary concern was not to inspect the pupils' writing for literary skills, although he admitted that more corrections and comments probably referred to stylistic matters than to

other aspects, such as content. In addition, he considered that his criteria were 'floating', and varied from pupil to pupil, depending upon individual needs.

The Science teacher did not make a practice of collecting the pupils' exercise books unless they had sat a test and the marks were to be entered in the markbook, or some homework of particular significance had been set and he wished to check whether the pupils had actually done it correctly. Consequently, no grades were assigned to the pupils' written work during the period observed.

Just before the study began, however, pupils were asked to write a project on an aspect of astronomy. As some of these were marked during the period observed, it is worth commenting on the teacher's practice. In this case, the Science teacher assigned a grade for achievement (no numeral was given) and provided a comment (e.g., 'B+. Good, easily understandable and good use of diagrams but take more care with your spelling. Quote all references used'), corrected some spelling mistakes and made brief annotations in the body of the project on the content, as well as ticking blocks of content.

In summary, therefore, in all three subjects very little comment was made to the whole class about the quality of their written work. The formal evaluation of writing occurred infrequently, and a single mark applied to several pages of writing in Social/Economic Studies and in some cases to over 20 pages in English. Comments were made on the pupils' writing, and corrections, but no checks appeared to be made to see whether pupils actually took any notice of these.

However, while *formal* evaluation occurred infrequently, a considerable amount of informal evaluation took place, particularly of content. For example, students were occasionally asked to read out their answers to the rest of the class, especially in Social/Economic Studies and English, while written comments were sometimes used as discussion points. Although this type of evaluation was often subtle, it had the advantage, from the teacher's perspective, of being much more immediate and direct. It is likely, too, that many of these more subtle teacher-pupil interactions were overlooked by the observers as it was not always possible to listen to all such exchanges, particularly when

conversing with a particular pupil while the teacher was talking to another one.

II Profiles of the Case Study Pupils

Pupil One: Mark

Mark enthusiastically entered into all language activities and was one of the most diligent pupils in the class. Once a task had been set he would not waste any time in settling down to it, especially written work. He wrote almost furiously, rapidly filling up successive lines until he was satisfied with the amount that he had produced. Mark sat with a group of boys in Science all of whom purposefully tackled the required tasks with a minimum of fuss. One pupil in this group occasionally expressed his mild annoyance at the distractability of some other pupils in the class and their more haphazard work methods.

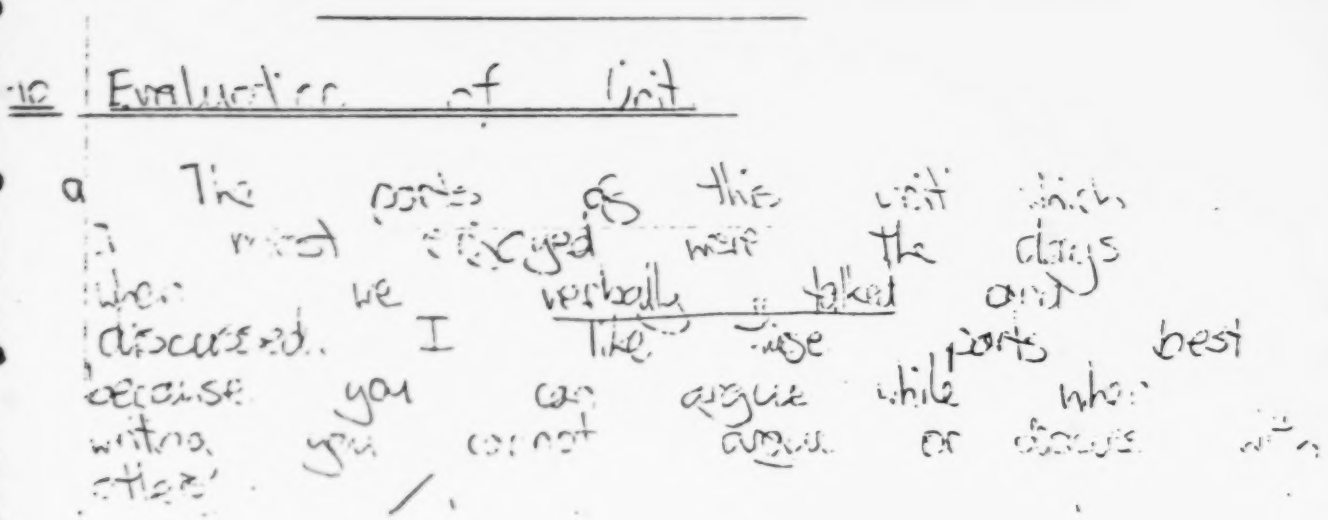
Mark also took an active part in class discussions and was among the most frequent contributors, rarely reluctant to venture his opinions. With his dark-rimmed spectacles, he looked like the archetypal scholar and was considered by his teachers to be one of the most capable pupils in all subjects. His *PAT: Reading Vocabulary* and *PAT: Listening Comprehension* scores placed him over the 90th percentile in each case, while his *PAT: Reading Comprehension* was marginally lower; he had received a '1' for written language from his previous school and high grades for his third form work.

A very efficient and highly-organised pupil, Mark consistently dated his work, always had the necessary books and pens available and was prepared to assist his peers if called upon to do so. He rarely sought guidance from the teacher and required no supervision, since he was highly-motivated and dedicated to his schoolwork. He was considered especially able in Mathematics, and had a strong interest in computers. Recently he had won a local competition for writing an elementary program, all of which was done out of school time.

Of the case study pupils, and possibly of all pupils in this class, Mark was the most prolific writer during the period observed in each of English, Social/Economic Studies and Science, writing

slightly more than the other productive pupils and three to four times as much as Owen and Philip. It did not seem to matter what kind of writing was required, whether short answers or extended pieces, as Mark outwrote everyone on nearly all tasks. In an average week, he wrote a minimum of three to four pages for each of the subject-areas observed, though more for English than Social/ Economic Studies or Science.

Perhaps because of the rapidity with which he wrote, Mark did not have a particularly tidy script though his letters were reasonably large and legible with wide gaps between each word:


Evaluation of Unit
a The parts of the unit which I most enjoyed were the days when we verbally discussed. I like these parts best because you can argue while when writing you cannot argue or discuss with other

He invariably used red ballpoint for headings and underlined major ones twice, such as the title for the day's work in English, and new topics covered within units in both Science and Social/ Economic Studies. The title-page for the unit on stereotyping appeared to be very hastily produced (see next page); Mark preferred not to 'waste' time on decorating his written work, instead putting most of his efforts into the act of writing.

Sometimes he used coloured felt-tip pens, such as for the title of a book he reviewed (*Judo Boy*) in English, and new units in Social/Economic Studies and Science. When the period of observations was almost over, the class had barely started a new topic entitled 'Production and Resources'; Mark left two-thirds of a page for a large heading, though he had only pencilled in the appropriate words at the time his work was photocopied. For

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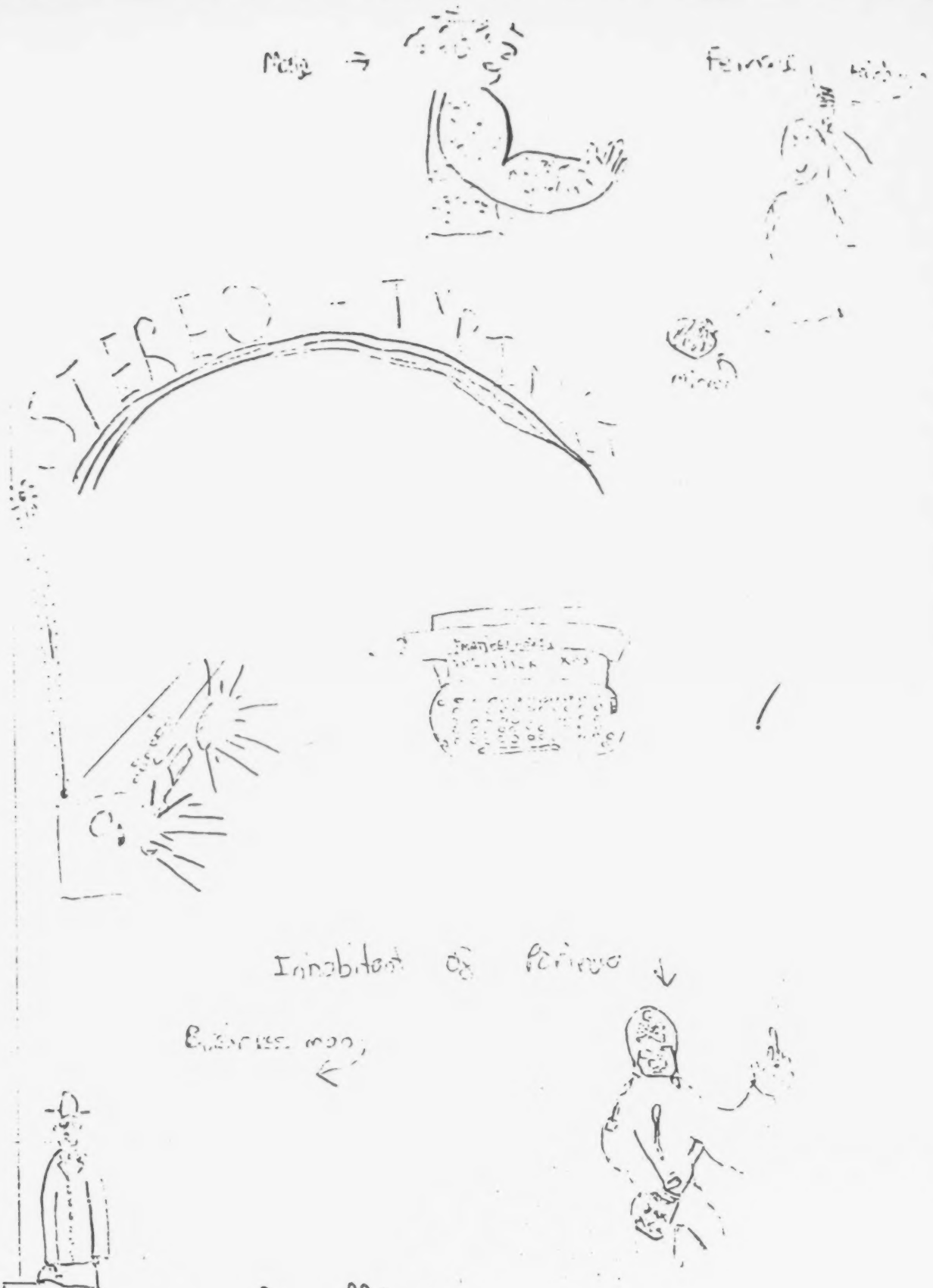

By Ma

B/2. A very good unit of work. Well done!

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the two units in Science, 'Growth and Reproduction' and 'Chemical Change', the headings were comparatively large (about 3cm high) with the remainder of the page in each case filled with roughly executed illustrations. Generally, Mark's diagrams were carefully labelled and reasonably accurate, but he appeared to take no more time than was needed to create a rough outline: Mark could not be described either as an artist or a 'copyist'.

Mark's spelling was usually accurate, though a small number of errors can be found in his written work, e.g., 'emmigrated', 'chrystals'. Occasionally, in his haste to get ideas on to the page, he invented an expression, e.g., 'totally in negelance of' or used tautologous phrases, e.g., 'when we verbally talked and discussed' or 'only a few hidden remnants are hidden away'. Generally, however, he used new terms correctly and his vocabulary was appropriate to the context in all subject-areas observed. Mark admitted that he did not usually read over what he was writing as he was writing it: 'I don't go over my writing to find mistakes ... I'm more interested in the ideas and getting them down'. And once, when an error was pointed out to him, he did not make any effort to correct it. Even a cursory inspection of Mark's writing during the study shows that he very rarely crossed out any words or rewrote sections.

Mark completed all writing tasks quickly and comprehensively, whether part of English, Social/Economic Studies or Science. He followed directions carefully, and his written work provides a full and detailed record of the tasks carried out in these subject-areas over the whole period observed. Mark's writing is like an account of his thinking, as his comments flowed unself-consciously onto the page, particularly in English and Social/Economic Studies.

As far as I know there is no poverty in New Zealand as bad as in John A. Lee's story but the closest I think that would be two unemployed parents with a few kids, no money in the bank, renting a state house in an area like Mangere which is a poor area.

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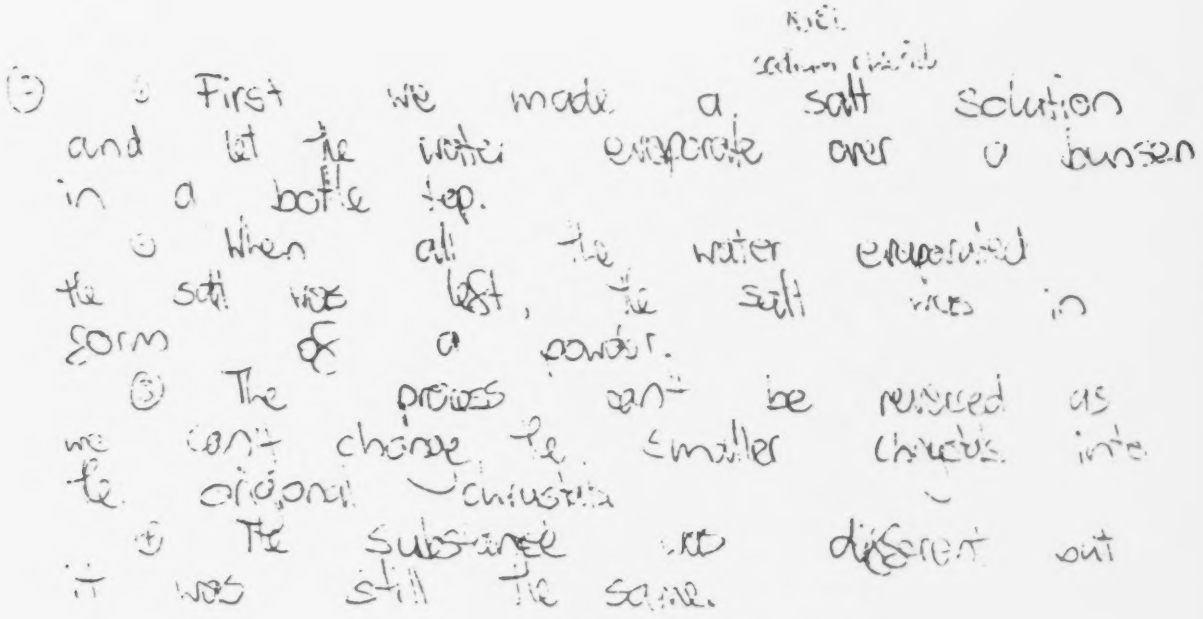
Sentences were varied, though often lengthy (sometimes taking up several lines) as he attempted to put down a large number of ideas. However, his meaning was clear, despite occasional 'loose' thinking when handling difficult concepts (such as social class). Mark was a competent notetaker, and when carrying out experiments in Science he wrote his observations down accurately and as fast as he could manage them. Occasionally, too, when the teacher discussed what was required with the class Mark wrote notes as private reminders on a piece of scrap paper. His notes consisted of sentences rather than phrases and he used well-formed paragraphs for extended pieces of writing.


First we made a salt solution and let the water evaporate over a bunsen in a bottle top.
When all the water evaporated the salt was left, the salt was in form of a powder.
The process can be reversed as we can't change the smaller crystals into the original crystals
The substance was different but it was still the same.

In English, Mark received B/2 for his collection of material on stereotyping which, while not the highest mark assigned, was among the highest awarded. The teacher also wrote 'thoughtful comments' in two places. In Social/Economic Studies, however, Mark consistently obtained the highest marks during the period observed: A⁻/1 (with the comment: 'Very detailed, excellent'), and A/1. In Science he received an A+ for his astronomy project (entitled 'The Theory vs. the Facts') which was completed just before the start of the period observed.

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Pupil Two: Nina

Nina was also a diligent pupil, very quiet in class and attentive. Once tasks had been described by the teacher she would set about them with an air of purpose and commitment. Nina sat with a group of girls in Science who, like the group to which Mark belonged, went about their written work with a minimum of fuss, though this group was occasionally distracted for a few moments. Nina liked to keep busy; as she said about writing, 'You've really got to think about what you're doing'.

Nina rarely took an active part in class discussions. Her teachers agreed that she was about average in attainment though considerably above average in commitment and motivation, perhaps a plodder. It is interesting to note that, in her own estimation, Nina considered that she was unlikely to obtain better results if she put even more effort into her writing: 'I can't really improve because I work very hard anyway all the time'. Her *PAT: Reading Vocabulary* score put her on the 47th percentile, while for *PAT: Reading Comprehension* she was at the 20th percentile. Her previous school had assigned a grade of 3 for written language, though she had received good grades on her third form report in most subjects.

Nina was also well-organized, with the requisite writing aids, and rarely sought assistance from any of the teachers or from her peers. She consistently dated her written work. Nina was relatively prolific, too, particularly in Science and English where her daily output was often a page or more for each of these subjects. In Social/Economic Studies her daily output was rather less, at about half a page per period.

Nina's writing was legible. She used a form of printing, though with varying slopes on the letters: some vertical, some sloping to the left and others to the right (see next page), even within the space of a few lines. Nina's headings, which were generally the same size as the rest of her writing, were always underlined twice in red ballpoint in English and Social/Economic Studies; in Science, however, she used coloured felt-tip pens and varied the colours used both for the headings and the underlining. Questions were almost always written in red ballpoint (and less frequently in green) and the answers in blue. Major headings were somewhat larger though rarely more than 1cm in height. Nina was business-like and appeared to spend very little

time on this aspect of presentation. Lists were clearly ruled up. Her diagrams tended to be very small, taking up considerably less space than Mark's did, though they were neatly executed with reasonably clear labels.

Nina finished all the writing tasks set, though seemed to run out of ideas more quickly in Social/Economic Studies possibly because tasks were less firmly structured in this subject. She seemed to enjoy following the guidelines provided in English and Science, especially, as a considerable amount of writing in this subject entailed copying or summarizing the contents of prescribed folders:

In this section we find ways to tell when a Chemical Reaction has taken place. In each Chemical Reaction there is a Chemical Change. And Chemical Changes are due to the Chemical properties of certain substances.

Activity 1 $BaCl_2$ + $CuSO_4$ Crystals

Put 5 or 6 crystals of barium chloride into a clean dry, small test tube. Put the same ~~as~~ number of copper sulphate crystals into arither test tube.

① Describe the solid barium chloride. Small, white crystals, which ~~to~~ look like powder.

② Describe the solid copper sulphate small, blue crystals which stuck together.

Activity 2

Add 3 mls water to each of the test tubes

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For more extended pieces of writing Nina used well-formed sentences, as in her evaluation of the unit on stereotyping:

6/93

Evaluation of this unit

I ~~thought~~ thought That this unit was good. I enjoyed
Sp. the ~~essays~~ essays the stories and looking at the pictures.
I don't ~~think~~ think there was any aspects in the
unit that I didn't enjoy at all.
I don't think there was any thing that
I learnt in this unit and if there was it was
only a tiny thing.
Ie I think that if we spent less on any
thing it would only make us ~~would~~ start to
get sick of the unit and wouldn't enjoy or
to try hard at what we were ~~don't~~ doing.
I feel I have worked hard in this unit
the only area I could improve on would be
to speak out more during discussion.

✓ Helpful comments.

As with all the pupils in the class, however, much of Nina's writing was in note form, using phrases which rarely required punctuation. Nina's notes are clearly set out and easy to interpret.

Nina's spelling was often inaccurate, e.g., 'blood thrusty' for bloodthirsty, 'examering' for examining, 'finaly' for finally, 'aother' for other. She often inverted letters, too, e.g., 'arcoss', 'turth' or wrote an 'i' for an 'a' as in 'capibly' and 'suitibly' or added letters as in 'maneragers' for managers. In this short extract she has made several elementary errors:

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lose you job, get sick or can't work you still get money so the poverty isn't half as bad

This piece is also typical of her language usage:

If the parents of ~~a~~ Kids ~~are~~ are well off and have got a good job is going to effect the type of jobs the Kids are going to get. For example you need money to further your education when you leave college so unless you have a good job during holidays or your parents can support you. You are not going to have enough money. Also if your parents have a good job, that is a well recognised job it is possible going to help your get a good job. Also if you have got 4E you are more likely to get a job than if you have only got 5-C in 2 subjects.

Nina frequently used apostrophes incorrectly, and misspelt common words such as 'where' or 'their' and, occasionally, there was no agreement between nouns and verbs, e.g., 'there was any aspects'. Nina admitted that she was 'a messy writer', but that she did not have the time to check over her writing except to see if words were missed out or if the sense was clear. She said, 'I don't have time ... I'm too busy doing the writing in class because there's a lot to be done'. Occasionally, however, she crossed misspelt words out and attempted them again correctly.

In English, Nina received C+/2 for her work on stereotyping, with the teacher complimenting her on the effort she had put into it. Her grades in Social/Economic Studies were similar: C+/3+ and C+/2 (with several ticks scattered throughout for particular comments), while for her Science project she obtained a B+ with the comment, 'Good, easily understandable and good use of diagrams but take more care with your spelling'.

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Pupil Three: Owen

Owen was easily distracted in class and spent a great deal of time looking around the room and talking to his immediate neighbour whom he sat next to in all three subjects. He appeared to have a very casual attitude towards school work and often wrote nothing or very little in class even when tasks were set which required a written input. He tended to do as little work as possible and was one of the pupils who occasionally annoyed the outspoken boy in Mark's Science group.

Owen rarely participated in class discussions and if called upon to offer a comment tended to give a brief reply. For the *PAT: Reading Comprehension* he had a percentile rank of 55, for *PAT: Listening Comprehension* 61 and *PAT: Reading Vocabulary* 56. For written language Owen's previous school had assigned him a 3⁻, and in his third form report he had obtained an average grade of C.

Owen did not have to borrow paper or pens from others, but made very little use of his own in any case: for Owen, extreme brevity was a virtue, and he often left work uncompleted. Although he hardly ever required guidance from any of his teachers he was occasionally relocated in the classroom in order to reduce chatter in his immediate vicinity.

Owen rarely wrote more than a few lines per period in English and in Social/Economic Studies, but produced slightly more in Science. In a week, the total amount written in these three subjects rarely exceeded two or three pages.

Owen's script was sometimes difficult to read, as he tended to run letters together within words, even though there was generally a gap of ½cm or more between words:

D To find out how much time passes you look at the hands of a clock twice to see how far they have moved
E A force is something which can cause a change in the shape or motion of an object
F Work is the product of the force in newtons exerted on an object and in the distance in meters through which the force acts
G a was not an question definition because it did not explain what a former and not are.

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Owen occasionally underlined headings but was not consistent in this. Similarly, the kind of heading varied: in Social/ Economic Studies, for example, some headings were written in capital letters while others were in lower-case, apart from the first letter. He did not use his ruler as often as Mark or Nina, except in Science for charts or large tables copied off the board, and in English with the list of domestic tasks. Also, whereas some of the other pupils wrote out questions followed by their responses, Owen tended to omit questions at times, and more frequently than either Mark or Nina did. The title of his astronomy project was done with coloured felt-tips; however, other headings such as for the new topic, 'Chemical Change', were not even included in the samples collected. Owen's larger diagrams were reasonably tidy, with accurate labels, but others were apparently hastily sketched. The overall impression obtained from examining his written work is that it was very 'scrappy'; it was executed hastily with little concern for neatness and clarity.

Owen made fewer spelling mistakes than Nina, though rather more than Mark. His punctuation was erratic, with sentences often lacking full-stops, and there are very few commas in his work as a whole, or apostrophes. When asked whether he checked over what he had written, he said that he did look for missing words and misspellings; however, it seemed unlikely that he 'edited' his writing very often if at all in practice.

John Jacobs lives with his family he many they bring in isn't much his father goes around the country doing little things like gardening and fixing his mother is a waitress three nights a week for a little pub down the road John hangs around with all his friends down the snooker by John wanted better than all the John had, had a few jobs running messages.

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In English, Owen received C⁻/3 for his written work in the stereotyping unit with the comment, 'There appears to be quite a lot of work either unfinished or not included here'. His Social/Economic Studies remarks were graded C/3 in each case, without a comment, while for his astronomy project he obtained C⁻ with the comment, 'What books did you use?'.

Pupil Four: Philip

Philip was very conscious of the inadequacies of his written work, particularly his spelling. As a result, perhaps, he worked comparatively slowly and sometimes required time to sort out the requirements of writing tasks. When interviewed he stated that 'When people say they do a lot of work in class they usually mean writing and, for me, writing is the hardest thing to do'. By 'writing' Philip may have meant handwriting as he seemed to have considerable difficulty in forming words, and wrote at a reasonably slow speed. When asked what his greatest strength in writing was, Philip replied: 'None, really. I'm really quite hopeless at it'. Yet he admitted that spelling was his main concern: 'When I spell things right I think it's good. I wouldn't mind writing so much if I could spell correctly'. He thought that his spelling difficulties prevented him from writing down good ideas.

Philip was not a disruptive pupil. Most of the time he went diligently about tasks which had been set, though often after one of the teachers had clarified what he was supposed to do. On some occasions Philip produced very little, preferring to look around the room or talk to his peers, especially in Science for, like Owen, he was a member of the group which frequently required teacher intervention in order to reduce noise and to increase on-task behaviour. Philip contributed to class discussions, however, particularly with anecdotal observations.

No records of tests sat or previous reports were available at the school for this pupil.

Philip wrote a little more than Owen altogether, though still only managed a few lines per period. Although Owen and Philip wrote similar amounts in Social/Economic Studies, Philip was rather more prolific in English, sometimes approaching half a page per

period, but less so in Science where his notes were very brief and rarely exceeded half a page in a week.

4, blue hard to see trough.
5, no. one is ones not.

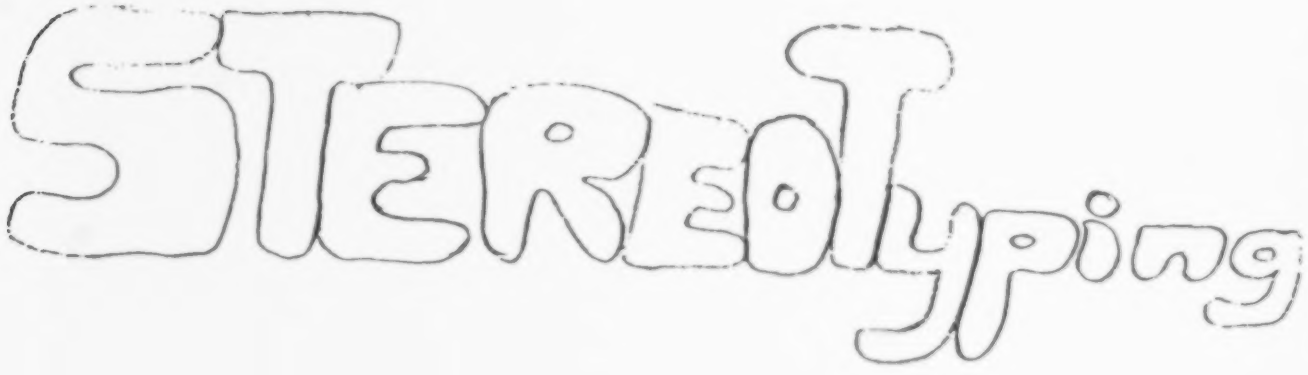
6, they did not mix probply. the turned a bluey colour!
7, yes

5, It couldn't be Its got some thing ~~else~~ else in it.
9. because it got copper sulpbate in it.
10,

11,

12. lead nitrade solution is clear and in liquid form
13. hard: hard in chisty form.

In English, Philip underlined headings twice in red, and wrote a large, correctly spelt heading though it was not accompanied by diagrams for the unit as a whole:



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His headings in Science and Social/Economic Studies were done in the same fashion. He was the only one of the case study pupils to date his Science work when the observations began, though the others did so subsequently at their teacher's request. His diagrams in Science were often left incomplete, without clear labels, and he omitted many of the diagrams included by his fellow pupils. Perhaps because of his script, Philip's writing appears to be very untidy:

A brief paragraph on increased opportunities for me'm

Since to washing machines (etc) the females can play sport, golf, tennis (ect).

Effected of family size on womens opportunities.

If a mother had 9or10 kids they would all ways be in the way and she would have know no.

As has been pointed out, Philip's spelling was very poor: he seemed to have to struggle with several words in the same sentence at times, and he made mistakes when copying from the blackboard too. The following examples (from English) illustrate the difficulties he faced:

Phipsical: like a brick lyer has to left all those bricks a female might not be able to.

Womans have nerly always been secketerry. Its always happsed

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A. its hard to listen to a female voice on the radio and you can switch it off. but an old ladys took four hours.
B. he dosn't like them to much because they tends to took to much.
C. no! its got worse because theres womens lib and they whant more right.

He was relatively consistent with fullstops, but apostrophes and commas hardly ever appeared in his written work. His sentencing was often erratic, and his ideas unclearly expressed. Philip was aware of his difficulties and often despondent about his writing.

In English, Philip received a grade of $D^{+}/2^{-}$, i.e., a low grade for achievement and a reasonably high grade for effort. In Social/Economic Studies on both occasions he obtained the same mark: C/3 and, in each case, there was a comment from the teacher: 'Too brief! Take care with writing' and 'Tidy this up. Read instructions given at beginning of year'. For his Science project Philip was awarded C^{-}, together with the comment 'A project needs more than just facts copied from a book'. Philip was often reminded, therefore, of the inadequacy of his written work, as this comment from his Science teacher further illustrates: 'Philip, you are a long way behind and what you have done is very untidy. Show me this book tomorrow (Tuesday 20/9) with the homework you have done to catch up'. However, in English, despite the low grade for achievement, his work on stereotyping was accompanied by this teacher comment: 'You've done some good work in this unit, Philip, especially in discussion work'.

It seemed that Philip's teachers were somewhat unclear about the most appropriate ways of handling the kinds of difficulties which he faced when carrying out writing activities. The English teacher recognized the effort which Philip appeared to apply to writing tasks,

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but both the Science and Social/Economic Studies teachers wrote comments on his work which suggested that he was failing to meet even minimal requirements involving tidiness and plagiarism. However, none of the teachers observed provided Philip with guidelines which he could use to improve his approach to writing tasks.

8. WRITING ACTIVITIES AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL: AN INTERPRETATION

I Teaching Writing

The content of the individual courses (i.e., English, Science and Social/Economic Studies) for which the teachers were responsible, and the specific topics covered within these subject-areas, received more attention in the secondary school classes than the teaching of writing itself. The knowledge that the students were expected to acquire, and activities involving the interpretation and manipulation of this knowledge, guided the organization of teaching time. As writing tasks were but one element of this process, written work tended to be a by-product rather than the central goal of most periods observed.

Writing was generally used in order to derive ideas, as in English or Social/Economic Studies, or to record relevant information, particularly in Science. Of necessity, these writing activities required a high level of input from the students themselves, even though their teachers clearly outlined the required tasks first and, through lengthy discussions and suggestions on the board, often provided ideas before the students began writing. The most important feature of each piece of writing, therefore, appeared to be its content, which was usually predetermined by the way the teacher specified the requirements of the

task. As a result, the ideas students used were regarded as more significant for most writing tasks than the language used to express them, or the format adopted in presenting them.

Writing was seen as one of the primary methods, if not the main one, for helping students to extend their own *thinking*. At certain points in some lessons the teachers assisted their students to clarify their views towards a particular topic or issue by asking them to jot down some ideas. The third form English teacher, for example, wanted the students to be 'uninhibited about putting their ideas on paper'. The fourth form English teacher had a similar purpose:

> *Often I will get them to jot down notes to help them focus their ideas. I place a lot of importance on oral work and hope that it rubs off onto written work where they can justify what they have to say. I want to get them into the habit of justifying things in a written way.*

The fourth form Social/Economic Studies teacher shared this aim, too: 'I use writing to get the pupils doing something when only half of them are thinking'. In such instances the ideas expressed by the students took precedence over any other aspect of their writing.

As a natural consequence of this emphasis, perhaps, the written work that students carried out in class was of most interest to the teachers as an indication of the students' level of understanding of subject content, or of their ability to follow instructions (e.g., writing an introductory paragraph to an expository essay, as in fourth form English). When asked which aspects of the students' writing gave cause for concern the fourth form English teacher said:

> *It's not so much the grammatical, technical things. It's if the pupils haven't grasped the specific thing we're looking at, at that particular moment. For example, when they were writing a story about death some hadn't grasped that we were getting at mood. I don't think I get them to write just for the sake of writing.*

Assessment of students' written work, therefore, tended to reflect these central concerns. When checking students' writing in class the fourth form Social/Economic Studies teacher looked for 'analytical skills, the ability to classify, to categorize, i.e., pattern-forming'. When assigning marks to the students' folders of work on stereotyping, the fourth form English teacher checked what the students had done chiefly for its comprehensiveness of content. He looked for work that had been set during the unit and based the final grade on three or four

key exercises to which the students were expected to make a considerable personal contribution, as the remainder of the unit consisted largely of notes or summary paragraphs taken from comments listed on the blackboard. The main criterion for assigning a mark appeared to be that the student had covered the set tasks in a reasonably thorough manner. Similarly, the third form English teacher allowed 40 percent of the marks awarded for the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' for completing the discrete components of the task.

On a day-to-day basis, tasks requiring writing tended to follow a consistent pattern. Most tasks entailed relatively brief pieces of writing. In Science, at both class levels there was little variation, with short sentences or single-word responses being most common. Also, much of the notetaking was direct copying or, if in the pupils' own words, adapted minimally from supplied materials. In Social/Economic Studies at both levels, writing tasks were structured by the teacher and rarely required responses longer than two or three sentences. Although the writing tasks in English were more varied, most writing still involved short responses, of a few sentences in length, as answers to questions set by the teacher.

The written work students had to carry out was not always tightly prescribed or of a brief nature, however. Occasionally, students were given tasks which required more extensive writing, chiefly in English (at both levels) but also in Social/Economic Studies. However, as a proportion of the total amount of writing undertaken, 'essays' took up less than 5 percent of the students' writing in both the third and fourth form classes.

The general pattern on nearly all the occasions when students wrote in class was for the teacher to explain to the students what they had to do, to guide the class's discussion of the task(s) and then to leave the students to complete the task(s) independently. All the teachers moved about the classroom at times dealing with students' queries, and sometimes made encouraging comments in passing or provided extra motivation for some students. In particular, if individuals conveyed their uncertainty about *what* they had to do in class, teacher assistance was readily forthcoming about the nature of the writing tasks set. Also, if students appeared to be bogged down the teachers sometimes provided gentle encouragement, such as in third form English and Social/Economic Studies. The English teacher, for example, was aware

that some students had trouble writing their daily journal and attempted to help the 'reluctant' writers: 'what I do is sit down next to them and I'll try to get them expressing their ideas and I'll record them. Some of them just can't order their ideas'.

All of the teachers participating in the study at the secondary level understood the need to encourage their students to learn in a positive rather than in a punitive manner. Developing and maintaining a warm and secure classroom environment were considered essential at this school, not just for writing but for all classroom activities. As the fourth form English teacher said:

> *It is always easy to criticize or attack a student's work or abilities, but it often requires considerable effort and patience to be positive. Moreover, the aim of developing and praising a student's strengths, rather than constantly highlighting his or her weaknesses, is a key principle at our school.*

This perception may account for the teachers' practice of avoiding drawing undue attention to aspects of their students' writing which presented difficulties to some students.

Many students were consistently poor spellers, or used a barely legible style of handwriting, or were unable to express their thoughts on a topic in a clear and coherent manner. But such students rarely asked for help, possibly regarding their longstanding difficulties as insurmountable, and were largely left to their own devices to improve those aspects of their writing which were giving them difficulty. It is possible that, apart from considerations of time, this approach was adopted by the teachers because of the assumed negative effects on some students of an over-emphasis on language errors, and because 'correct' or appropriate usage was considered less important than the quality or number of ideas presented in the students' written work. A comment from the third form English teacher, which was endorsed by the fourth form English teacher, emphasizes this concern:

> *I think it is very demoralizing for a student who is perhaps super on ideas but has difficulty either with spelling or even with the fundamental writing task. I think it is very damaging to simply get back work the whole time which has scrawled corrections throughout.*

Patterns of marking students' writing were relatively consistent in the extent to which 'mistakes' were noted or corrected: all the teachers observed either marked a few or none at all.

Written work in all the subject-areas observed was formally collected usually about once a month or, less frequently, once a fortnight, which meant that pupils did not receive immediate feedback on either the content or form of their writing apart from specific enquiries directed at the teacher when they were circulating around the classroom, though this occurred rarely. Detailed written feedback was rare. In the third form English class, pupils received a comprehensive assessment of their work on the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier', covering various aspects, e.g., language, content, organisation and presentation. However, for Social/Economic Studies and Science at both levels, and fourth form English, students rarely received more than a positive global comment and a series of ticks for satisfactory work. Occasionally, when a student had not completed some required work, this was drawn to the student's attention (e.g., 'Where are the answers to these questions?). Generally, however, very few errors were corrected or commented upon.

Writing, therefore, was not 'taught' by the teachers in the study, as they tended to expect their students already to possess and be capable of using writing and associated language skills in their subject-areas. This was not an unreasonable expectation as most students coped adequately with the written work they were required to carry out. The teachers made few attempts on the whole, however, to improve the writing of students whose work showed that they experienced difficulties of some kind. There appeared to be little awareness of the problems some students encountered while they were engaged in the process of writing.

Particularly in the English classes, the teachers' approach was geared to appropriateness of language for different purposes, rather than to the teaching of discrete writing skills. As the fourth form English teacher stated:

> *I'm trying to develop certain skills in the (NESC) modes. Writing is not something given deliberate focus to, in the sense of 'today is writing, tomorrow shaping'. Subconsciously, I'm aware of what I'm trying to do, e.g., to get the pupils to punctuate, but I don't think 'this is the week I'm going to do punctuation'. I do push the idea that different kinds of language are appropriate on different occasions. For example, if they're writing a letter to the editor, they can't write it with errors, so punctuation will come in there; with a newspaper report using reported speech, speech marks will come in there. And I do have concerns, depending on what the situation is, the area I'm looking at. For example, essay writing: if they hadn't been able to get down notes or write an introductory paragraph that would have worried me.*

As a result, perhaps, writing in the secondary school subject-areas observed was seen mainly as a tool for retaining notes or students' thoughts on specific topics. Less emphasis was placed on correct language usage than on the ideas or content of written work. Writing was used for thinking and learning rather than as an end in itself.

II The Students' Approaches to Written Work

The case study students at the secondary level differed in the way they tackled tasks involving writing. Perhaps this is not a surprising observation as the four students in each class were carefully chosen to represent differing degrees of writing competence. The emphasis on presentation, the amount of writing completed, the time taken to carry out writing tasks, the attention given to proofreading and revising, the degree of teacher-student and student-student interaction, and specific difficulties encountered (such as the accuracy of the language used) were all dimensions of the students' approaches to writing where differences were observed.

1. PRESENTATION

Much of the written work the students were required to do was accompanied by diagrams, charts and other kinds of illustrative material which were often an integral part of the writing task. Most students also adhered to various requirements concerning the setting-out of pieces of writing, involving features such as the date, underlining, headings (important ones such as the titles of lists), gaps between paragraphs and sections of work, and margins.

Some students expended a great deal of effort on the appearance of the written page, with tidy handwriting, carefully lettered and coloured headings (most commonly using felt-tip pens), numbered sections and the date in the top lefthand corner. A page from Tania's work (not one of the case study students) illustrates one extreme (see over).

Most students, however, were content with rather less artwork; to them an aesthetically pleasing page was less important than covering the required minimum of writing. Generally, nearly all the students underlined headings, provided the date and gave extra attention to important headings. Occasionally, one or two students wrote out questions in a different colour from the rest of their

T.V.'s AND WOMEN...

The women in ad's seem to always have golden sun-tans, make-up and colgate smiles and long legs.
The men are good-looking, muscles, physical, golden tan and do physical jobs
Women are shown as housewives, or doing low jobs-secretary
men have high executive positions.

T.V. SURVEY ON THE YOUNG DOCTORS

① JOBS...

	M	F
① Secretary		✓
② Doctors	✓	
③ Nurses		✓
④ Dreaming	✓	
⑤ Sisters		✓
⑥ Cast lady		✓
⑦ Admiral	✓	

② ACTIVITIES...

MALE	FEMALE
pushing things	beds
serve at bar	test samples
doctors	make/serve tea
order people about	answer phones/call.
	write reports
look after child	give orders.

③ APPEARANCE...

	M all	F all
good looking	all	all
sunny/tanned		
hat		
tall	|||	|||
short		
old		
young	most	most
glasses		
Australian	all	all
others		
long hair		||
short hair	all	

	M	F
married		||
single	most	most
bicycle		
other colour	||||	|||
handicaps	o	

④ CLOTHING

FEMALE...

	|||	Hats		
uniform						
casual					
top				MALE →	
skirts						
jeans					
dresses					

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text for additional emphasis, but this practice was by no means universal. A few pupils in each class, too, largely ignored such aspects of presentation, possibly because they could not be bothered with what they interpreted as finicky detail or because they preferred to do other things. One student, for example, in the fourth form class, for a considerable part of the study brought no exercise books to class and made a few jottings on a piece of borrowed paper which he consigned to the rubbish bin at the end of the period.

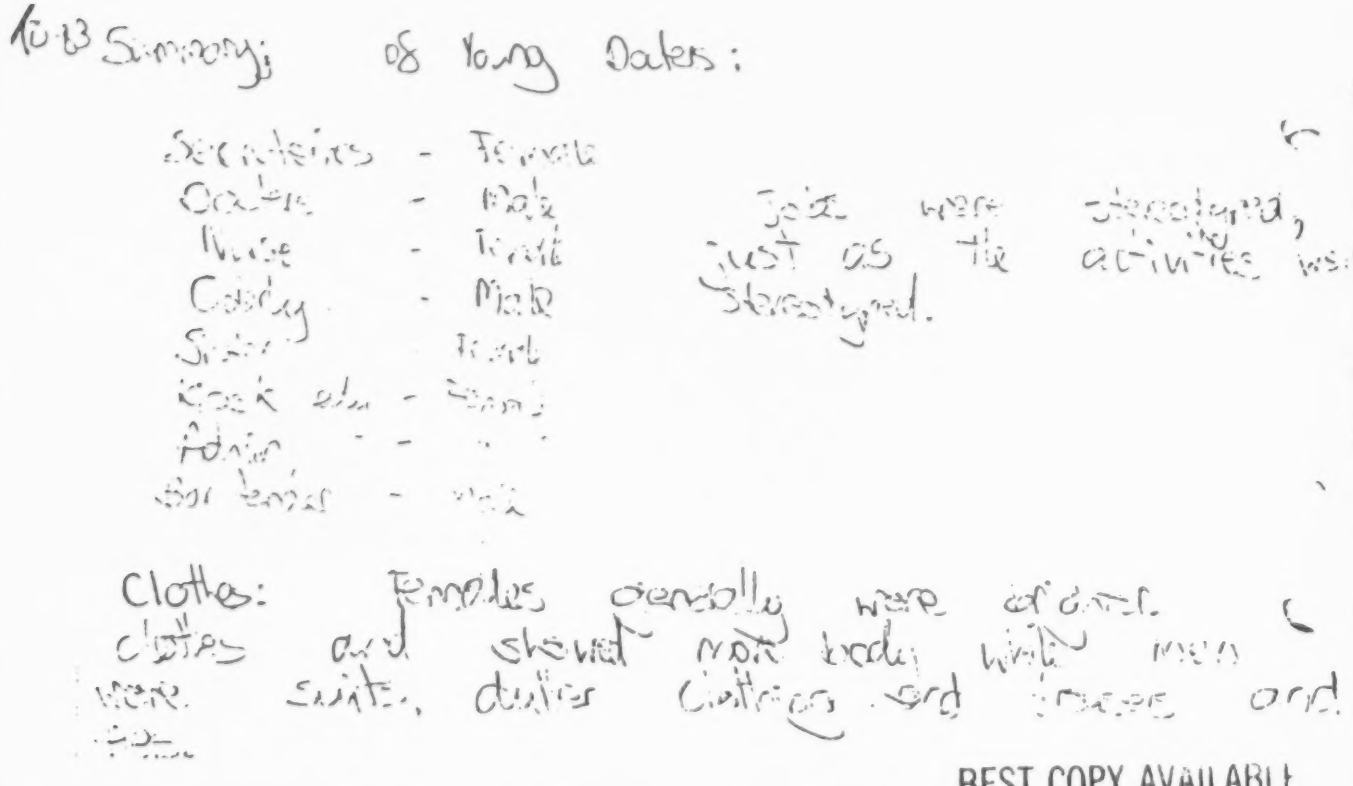
In the third form class many students found writing to be an unpleasant and difficult experience and avoided it, if possible, by (among other things) drawing or decorating pages rather than writing. Alternatively, more effort was given to meeting requirements of presentation (i.e., use of headings, ruling-off, underlining, or labelling maps, diagrams and charts) than to putting together sentences, especially when the 'Sunshine Kidnap Dossier' was being written. While some students wrote for a considerable portion of the English period, others preferred to spend most of their time searching for suitable material for collages, drawing maps very carefully, colouring in headings or illustrating kidnapper profiles. Inevitably, extended attention to activities such as these reduced the time available for creating a 'text'.

Similarly, in the fourth form class many students minimised the time available for writing by laboriously using coloured felt-tip pens on headings. Even relatively minor ones were often carefully 'drawn'. However, while most of the students underlined headings in red ballpoint, put the date, and left appropriate margins and gaps, on the whole this class did not appear to spend an inordinate amount of time on presentation during classtime. It was evident, for example, that many students - when the deadline for handing in the work done for the unit on stereotyping approached - spent a large proportion of one or two periods sorting pages out, completing parts of tasks previously left unfinished, ruling off headings and, occasionally, adding more colour to some pages, but for most of the periods observed students simply wrote or, if not writing, engaged in activities such as chatting with their neighbours, rather than decorating pages of writing.

It is possible that the fourth formers had a more businesslike

attitude towards writing tasks because of their teachers' views and practices. In Social/Economic Studies, for example, one of the students said that the teacher preferred them not to use lots of colours and to avoid big headings. And, on the whole, written work in this subject was not 'decorated' to quite the same extent as in English or Science. In English, the format for written work was largely determined by questions and headings written on the blackboard; most of the students imitated this format provided by the teacher. In Science, although several diagrams and charts were required and students generally drew them with care, the sheer amount of writing that had to be done based on the supplied thematic folders meant that students had little time to attend to anything but the essentials.

Interestingly enough, it was not the case that those students who wrote the most, and also often appeared to enjoy writing a great deal, necessarily spent most time on presentation. The student whose work is illustrated by the previous example was one of the most prolific of the fourth formers, and also spent considerable time on presentation. Mark, however, the *most* prolific writer, and the one who frequently obtained the highest grades, was much less concerned about the presentation of his work (see the example below). Although Mark's pages were well-organized, very little time was wasted in attending to matters of appearance, apart from underlining



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headings twice in red ballpoint. Even his diagrams in Science were hurriedly drawn. Mark preferred to *write*. Similarly, Irene, one of the most competent writers in the third form class, avoided elaborate headings and other decorative features. Some of the 'average' pupils, though, such as Kate, were meticulous about all aspects of presentation. At the other extreme can be found pupils, such as Owen, who appeared to be comparatively unconcerned about presentation, often not underlining headings and leaving some parts of their work incomplete.

Why do we hate the purples

Situation: we are all members of a race called the Greens We live in a country called greenland there are only two races in greenland. Greens (us) and the purple We hate the purples. why ??

they may beat us up
they have more powers than we do
Smarter than us

✓

① How they act is if they beat us greens up and how they act around in the street whether they give us crude salutes.
② Tradition If the green kids are taught to hate the purples from a young age they will And if they born to hate here clothes they will.
③ Life style If the purples are generally not nice people then the greens wont like them And if the purples like all our money we have reason not to like them.
④

/

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Nearly all the students observed had a legible script, though some styles of handwriting required a degree of decipherment, such as the third former Leon's and the fourth former Philip's. It is worth noting, however, that Mark's writing was generally untidy, possibly because of the rapidity with which he wrote. Again, there was not a simple relationship between legibility and overall writing competence, with the possible exception of those who found spelling accurately very difficult and who also seemed to have greater physical problems in forming letters.

2. PRODUCTIVITY

Over the period of the study, the students also differed in the *amount* of writing they completed. The 'highly competent' case study student in each class wrote copious amounts for all assigned tasks. Mark was the most prolific writer of the fourth formers observed, while the third former Irene was one of the most productive in her class. At the other extreme were pupils who wrote the bare minimum, failed to complete some tasks or did not even attempt others. As a result they produced significantly less writing daily than the 'highly competent' students for nearly every task.

Rates of productivity varied markedly within each class from student to student. In the third form class, for example, on one occasion one student wrote three words in an hour while another pupil wrote three and a half pages. In fourth form Social/Economic Studies Mark frequently wrote half a page or more in the time it took other pupils to write two or three lines. Consequently, his responses were rather more detailed, covering a wider range of ideas. Over the whole period of the study he wrote more than four times as much as Owen and Brent. Nina, though, also a prolific writer, took longer to put her ideas down than Mark. Working in bursts was also common, with many pupils alternating between writing for a short period and talking to neighbours or gazing about the room. Other students found writing to be a difficult and laborious task, such as Philip and Leon, and pupils like them often produced very little even when on-task.

For most students, writing was a chore. Even Mark admitted that 'writing is boring - there's always something you have to hand in'. Some students, therefore, adopted avoidance tactics in order

to postpone having to write until it was absolutely necessary, something which Mark never did, although Irene sometimes took a while to settle down to a task. James and Owen rarely began writing with the other students and often left tasks till the last possible moment; Owen, for example, could work fast when he wanted to. Another student on one occasion wrote six lines of a story and followed that up by writing his name and address several times. Occasionally students would doodle on a scrap of paper or in the back of their exercise books. Others 'lost' work and had to start again.

The fourth form Science teacher stated that 'Some pupils race ahead, especially two groups, and finish while others fluff about and don't get very much done'. Perhaps behaviour of this kind was more evident in Science simply because, to a large extent, students themselves could determine when they would be writing as a result of the way the sessions were structured.

To illustrate differences in the students' work habits during a practical Science session here is an account of what two of the case study pupils in the fourth form accomplished over 25 minutes. The class was working on a set of experiments which were rotated around the groups, requiring the preparation of tables in which results were noted. Mark, after a few minutes, had already drawn up the first table with the appropriate labels. He did not wait for the results of the experiment to become available before starting to set out the next table and, ten minutes later, had written out five tables altogether. Shortly after, he began rapidly drawing the frames for the sixth and final table, and had filled in the results for a few of the tables (for examples, see following pages). Owen, on the other hand, after he had set out the first table discovered that the group was actually working on the second set of experiments so crossed out a word he had entered in the first table and began drawing up the second table. By the end of the session he had finished the second table, but he never returned to the first one (nor did he subsequently bother to do so before the class moved on to another topic; the 'completed' work is illustrated on page 172).

Some students regularly 'lost' their previous day's work, or had an excuse for not doing their written homework. As a result, they often fell behind the class as a whole in the amount and range

From Mark's Science book (see over also)

Chemical Change

Physical Properties

Station II Constuction:

Object	Name (Element)	Conductive
Lead	Pb	Yes
Copper	Cu	Yes
Plastic Leather(Paper)		No
Sulphar	S	No
Hard Plastic		No

Station V Density: = Mass / Volume

Material	Element Name	Mass	Volume	Density
Lead	Pb		1 ml	

Station VI Melting:

Material	Element Name	melting time
Water	H_2O	
Wax		

Station VII Magnetic:

When a mixture of iron and sulfur are in contact with a magnet, the iron filings are attracted to the magnet because they are magnetic.

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Station I Colour:

Material	Element Name	Colour
Potassium Dichromate	KC_2O_7	Orange

① Darkest :
② Lightest :

Station II Texture

Material	Texture	Soft (1) to hard (7)
Pumice 1	rough + holey	1
~~Volcanic Obsidian~~ 2	~~sharp + smooth~~	3
Marble 3	Smooth + bumpy	2
Quartz 4		7
(~~Rock~~) ~~Limestone~~ Obsidian 5	Sharp Smooth - bumpy	5
Granite 6	Smooth + bumpy	4
$ Lime stone 7	Smooth + bumpy	6

Station III Smell:

Name		Element Name	Present (?)	Active ingredient common (?)
Acetic Acid	A		X	X
	B		✓	✓
	C		X	X
Vinegar (?)	D		X	✓
Pepper	E		✓	✓
	F		✓	X

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From Owen's Science book

STATION 1

Substance Number	Chemical Name	Colour
1 [redacted]		

STATION 2

Substance	Texture
Pumice	Rough
Bone	Smooth
Ebonite	Rough
Marbel	Rough with smooth parts

STATION 4

Substance	Conducts or not
Lead	Yes
Plastic	No
Sulpure	No

Station 5

Substance

of writing tasks completed; it seemed that these students were relatively unconcerned about finishing sections of written work accurately and reasonably comprehensively, or perhaps they lost interest in some tasks once new ones were set. Many students laboured over writing and clearly disliked having to write, such as Philip. Those who wrote least tended to have the severest writing difficulties.

3. PROOFREADING

In general, students in both classes rarely engaged in altering what they had first written, irrespective of the subject-area. Proofreading or editing (i.e., checking sentences for their sense and grammatical accuracy, correcting misspelt words or punctuation), appeared to be undertaken very infrequently despite occasional reminders by some of the teachers about the need for students to read over their writing. Kate, for example, claimed to proofread her written work but very rarely made alterations, even though a large number of errors could be found in her writing. Owen also claimed to re-read his writing to check the sense of what he had written, but when words with spelling mistakes were pointed out to him he did not seem to have been aware of them. As did other students, Mark, however, openly admitted that he was happy enough with his work and did not read it over. He said: 'I just write straight off. I don't usually read what I'm writing'. Crossed-out words in his writing were indeed very rare.

Competence in writing and willingness to proofread were unrelated, as students of varying writing ability seemed not to bother with proofreading. Dictionaries were rarely consulted and using them was regarded as slightly suspect by many students. When changes were made, they were done so immediately, usually after unintentional slips of the pen. Correcting fluid was very popular with some students and in the fourth form class a small bottle was often passed around the room surreptitiously to those who wanted to use it. In the third form class, corrections were usually made by crossing out and writing the new word above the old one.

Drafting (i.e., preparing an initial copy of a piece of writing), was also rarely observed, with the exception of a specific 'formal' letterwriting exercise in third form English. In the third form class, Irene and Kate rarely produced drafts, while James and Leon did not use them at all. In the fourth form class, none of the case study students made drafts. Some of the other students, usually female, wrote out copies in pencil first on to loose leaves which were later copied neatly, usually word for word, into their exercise books. Anne said that she liked to 'write it up properly afterwards', while Linda occasionally took notes in shorthand which she then transcribed fully. This was the closest to making drafts that any

of the pupils attained.

When students were engaged in note-taking, the usual practice was for actual phrases from the source to be loosely strung together. Students rarely attempted to summarize material in their 'own' words. No student wrote draft versions and then edited them; all wrote directly into their exercise books. Students made little or no effort to amend their own notes, even when the class discussion suggested that they had misinterpreted a point or omitted an important piece of information.

Revisions (i.e., altering relatively large blocks of content), were not observed. Once, in the fourth form class, a few stories written by the students were read out aloud to the whole class. It is possible that Tania's reaction, after hearing the teacher read out her story, provides a clue as to why revision was not undertaken by the students: 'When you read it I could tell that some parts should have been different, but not when I wrote it'. There was very little opportunity for students to listen to each other's imaginative writing, though it must be remembered that during the period of the study such writing occurred very infrequently in any case.

4. INTERACTION

Naturally enough, perhaps, most interaction between the teachers and students took place during class discussions, not while the students were actually committing ideas to paper. As a result, the content of many pieces of writing was derived from points raised in these discussions or from notes simultaneously recorded on the blackboard by the teacher. Class discussions took up a large proportion of some periods with the teachers asking students questions and commenting upon the students' replies, particularly in English and Social/Economic Studies at both levels. Students, therefore, had considerable opportunity to clarify what was required of them by way of content, even though direct requests for further information about the requirements of a specific writing task were rare.

Other tasks assigned to the students at the beginning of a session often received less discussion (e.g., in Science, when the students worked from supplied folders with tasks clearly set out)

before writing began, although students asked questions throughout the whole notetaking exercise, but usually about a concept or illustration which they did not understand.

While students were carrying out writing tasks the teachers were generally available, if required, to sort out queries. In both the third and fourth form classes students were sometimes asked to read their work out, which was then commented upon from the point of view of the ideas mentioned. Few comments were made about the *way* a task had been handled, except to indicate how a response could have been more detailed, as the focus of nearly all the lessons observed and of teacher comment was on the particular subject-matter covered, rather than *how* the information was being recorded.

Students sometimes discussed their written work among themselves, too, particularly when collaborative work was required as frequently occurred in Science when pupils were carrying out experiments in groups. Shared findings often lead to similar notes, as would be expected in a heavily content-bound subject. In the third form class students sometimes read out what they had written to others in their group, but such behaviour was rarely observed in the fourth form class. However, in this class some students occasionally swapped what they had been writing in order to obtain an informal peer reaction, as did some of the third formers as well. Again, students' comments were usually about content and not how the ideas were expressed or presented.

5. DIFFICULTIES

While some of the students observed seemed to enjoy writing, such as one of the fourth formers whose major problem seemed to be preventing her baby sister from eating the corners of projects she was completing at home, others disliked having to write. When asked why, they gave replies such as 'It's too hard', 'Writing is boring', and 'I don't know enough about it'. Even the prolific and competent writers often appeared to find writing a chore: 'There's always something you have to hand in' and 'You've *got* to write'.

Just being able to write, i.e., putting words on the page when requested to do so, *was* a problem for many students (see the section 'Productivity'). Matters of presentation (i.e., placement of headings, underlining, margins, and numbering sections of work), however, were rarely a source of difficulty for nearly all students.

even though some were more attentive to presentation than others, perhaps because some requirements were consistently reinforced by their teachers and, to a large extent, simply entailed following instructions. And the majority of students appeared to have at least some ideas to write down when writing tasks were set, even if there were large variations in the quantity and quality of content among the students observed.

However, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure and paragraphing presented major problems for some students. These students rarely asked for help, possibly because they considered that their difficulties were insurmountable. (For specific examples, consult the Pupil Profiles in particular, and the excerpts from students' written work throughout the report.) In general, the students tended to be satisfied with their first efforts, and to take their current level of performance for granted.

Why was this the case? Many students seemed to be overwhelmed by the sheer complexity of the writing process, perhaps partly for reasons hinted at by one of the case study students (who was considered to be a good writer):

> *Writing is work for most kids ... because you have to think about everything. When you are writing something you have to think about what you're saying, about all the punctuation, spelling and everything like that. When you're saying it, you don't have to worry about these things.*

Writing accurately demands concentration on both the subject content and the language used, and it is possible that some students were unable to cope adequately with both aspects at once. As a result, 'correct' language usage became subordinate to the need to write down at least *some* relevant material.

In addition, most students appeared to be still learning how to write well. It has already been pointed out that proofreading occurred infrequently in the classes observed, despite the occasional reminder from some of the teachers to students about the need to read over their writing carefully. Some students, therefore, may not have known *how* to proofread even when asked to do it (though presumably they could learn), simply because they had received insufficient practice in applying the appropriate techniques. As a result, their writing continued to have mistakes in it, whether

of a factual or a language-related kind.

Other students may have lacked the skills of self-appraisal and objectivity necessary to carry out proofreading and an evaluation of the adequacy of their own writing. Teacher comments occasionally reminded them of their writing difficulties, but these students may have been so bogged down (such as Philip with his spelling) that only a superhuman intervention on the part of their teachers would be able to bring about gradual improvements. Teaching these students proofreading skills may have been futile because their writing required intensive and prolonged attention by sensitive teachers aware of language learning processes.

SUMMARY

The Teaching of Writing

(i) Nearly all tasks requiring writing were clearly outlined by the teachers before the students began writing, often with considerable prior discussion and notes on the blackboard to provide ideas.

(ii) A lot of assistance was provided by the teachers when *setting* writing tasks, but students were rarely helped once they were engaged in writing down their ideas or notes.

(iii) Most writing tasks were very brief, up to two or three sentences in length, and of a factual nature.

(iv) Formal assessment was infrequent, and the main concern seemed to be that students had covered the necessary written work sufficiently. There was little detailed feedback once tasks were completed.

(v) Because the teachers tried not to be overly critical of the students.persistent writing difficulties were often accepted rather than constantly commented upon in order not to dishearten individual writers.

(vi) Teachers were mostly concerned with the content of their subject (appropriate ideas and topics) rather than correct language usage.

(vii) Discrete writing skills were not taught. Instead the emphasis was on appropriate language usage for a particular context.

(viii) Writing was chiefly used as a method of recording facts, to extend students' thinking, and as an indication of level of understanding of particular topics.

The Students' Approaches to Written Work

(i) Many students thought writing was difficult or boring, and some seemed overwhelmed by the effort required.

(ii) Students varied widely in the amount of writing they completed from day to day. While some wrote a few words or lines, others wrote up to two pages or more in an hour.

(iii) Work habits varied. Some students steadily progressed through each step of a writing task, while others left writing till the last possible moment. Some seemed unconcerned about completing writing tasks.

(iv) Many students spent more time on the presentation of individual writing tasks than on the writing itself.

(v) On the whole, pupils worked independently and after discussion there was little interaction with the teacher. Students sometimes exchanged ideas with each other.

(vi) Proofreading was rarely observed. As a rule students did not seem to check over their written work, and there were wide variations in accuracy of language usage.

(vii) Those students who wrote the least tended to have major problems, such as very poor spelling or an inadequate grasp of the concepts involved in a particular topic.

9 CONCLUSIONS

I Summary

In the introduction to this report, the statement is made that this study "examines in detail some of the actual contexts in which written work is produced" and that the research was carried out in order to "describe how a small number of teachers actually conduct their 'writing sessions' and what pupils do when they are engaged in activities which entail writing", including looking at samples of pupils' work and teacher and pupil comments about the written work undertaken.

Consequently, an outline of the different writing tasks assigned to the pupils in each class observed (from form one to four) is provided. Typically, the written work pupils carried out at the first two levels (intermediate school) was brief in nature, consisting of single sentences or short paragraphs, tended to be descriptive or factual, and was often copied. The written work carried out in forms three and four (secondary school) was also relatively brief, commonly from one to three sentences in length except in English where short paragraphs were often required, usually descriptive and in response to questions set by the teacher, and often copied or derived from passages in folders or notes on the

blackboard. In all these classes at both levels pupils were sometimes required to write 'creative' pieces, either based on imagined or their own experiences, but these were a minor proportion of the total amount of writing done. Most of the writing carried out, however, was of a routine, mechanical nature requiring minimal input from the students themselves.

Attention was also paid to the kinds of guidance pupils were given in order to help them complete their writing tasks. At all levels observed, the requirements of tasks were clearly explained so that pupils knew what they were supposed to do and, often, a discussion led by the teacher was conducted in order to provide pupils with ideas which they could incorporate in their pieces of writing. On the whole, however, pupils were left to finish their writing by themselves, though any queries the pupils had were dealt with by their teachers immediately. No instruction covering discrete writing skills was observed, but pupils were given the opportunity to use writing. In the intermediate classes, the form two pupils were engaged in writing activities for at least 45 minutes a day (though this figure may be an underestimate), while the form one pupils had about 75 minutes daily for such activities. In the secondary classes, at the form three level slightly more than half of each period was allowed for written work (a little more time in Science than in English or Social/Economic Studies) while, on average, 40 percent of each fourth form period was given over to writing activities (but considerably more time in Science, and somewhat less in English and Social/Economic Studies). In other words, at the secondary level - at least in the subjects observed - pupils spent more time writing every day than the intermediate level pupils did. Much of the writing at the secondary level was to record information (both 'facts' and opinions) and, although the intermediate pupils also wrote for this purpose, at the secondary level all pupils were expected to be able to do so independently, unlike the comparatively small number in the intermediate classes.

While all tasks at both levels were set by the teachers, particularly at the secondary level it was assumed that pupils knew what to do already. Comments about different tasks tended to be addressed to the class as a whole and to focus on content, as did queries from the few pupils who made them. Although some grouping according to ability took place in

the intermediate classes, this was not done in the secondary school. Feedback concerning how pupils had coped with the tasks they were set was minimal; rather more attention was paid to this aspect at the intermediate level, where feedback was more frequent and more time was given to the appraisal of pupils' efforts in 'public'. In the secondary school classes pupils generally received grades at the end of a unit of work; the feedback, therefore, was less immediate and probably had less impact, though this was difficult to gauge accurately. As a rule, very little attention was paid to the processes involved in putting together pieces of writing, though considerable emphasis was placed on explaining task requirements and prior discussion/stimulation.

Pupils had different strategies for tackling writing tasks, but most shared at least one thing in common: an interest in presentation. Apart from one or two exceptions, all pupils put a great deal of effort into illustrations, headings and other decorative matters accompanying their writing. Pupils at the intermediate level were especially keen on such features of presentation. At the secondary level more differences were apparent but most adhered to requirements concerning the setting out of their writing, even if rather less attention was given to artwork. In the fourth form class some pupils had a marked preference for writing, rather than decoration, and spent very little time on adorning pages of writing.

Some pupils wrote a great deal for most tasks they were set, while others wrote very little. Occasionally, in the secondary classes, a small number of pupils wrote very little for whole periods. The case study pupils who were considered to be 'good' writers wrote copious amounts for some tasks, while other pupils wrote the bare minimum and even omitted altogether some writing tasks. Some pupils could put words onto paper extremely rapidly while others wrote almost painfully slowly. Some, for example, found great difficulty in the physical act of handwriting, and even copying was hard for them. A large number of pupils at both the intermediate and secondary levels enjoyed writing and were keen to complete the tasks they were set. Others viewed writing as a chore, or boring, and avoided writing for as long as possible.

Apart from the immediate correction of unintentional slips of the pen, pupils rarely checked or proofread their writing, and even some

of the more prolific writers made careless mistakes with spelling or punctuation. In their case haste may have been the cause, the urgent need to carry on with the next task. Other pupils seemed to have great problems with spelling, grammar and punctuation. Although one of the intermediate teachers was assiduous in correcting mistakes in pupils' writing, the rest of the teachers observed appeared to be more concerned about coverage of content than the surface features of language use. Generally, pupils' writing was accepted for what it was, possibly in order to avoid giving pupils negative feelings about their performance. However, those pupils who found writing difficult were certainly aware of their 'problem', and often despaired about it. As has already been pointed out (p.176) many students seemed to be overwhelmed by the sheer complexity of the writing process and the thought that it required. Interestingly enough, and perhaps not surprisingly, those students who wrote the least tended to have the most severe writing difficulties. But little active assistance was provided for these pupils.

II Further Research

Inevitably, in a study which focusses on teaching and learning practices, more questions are raised than are satisfactorily answered. How typical were the writing 'contexts' observed? It is possible that the descriptions provided in this report would have differed in some respects if other schools, teachers or pupils had been observed instead of those that took part. What do pupils think about their own approaches to writing? If the conversations with the pupils had been more frequent and more probing a more extensive body of information about pupils' attitudes towards writing would have been collected. Little attention in this study was paid to preferred writing activities, for example. Video recordings could have been made of the case study pupils as they wrote or discussed their writing with the teacher(s) or their peers. The samples of writing could have been analyzed in order to detect developmental changes, and so on. However, in the time available it was not possible to conduct a study which embraced all these features.

If teachers are to be provided with suggestions and materials which will enable them to assist their pupils to improve their writing, these issues also need to be investigated.

1. Is it possible to identify teachers whose pupils develop their writing skills more effectively than pupils in other classes? For example, do teachers who also write and understand their own writing processes teach writing more effectively than those who do not? Do teachers who spend more time discussing pupils' writing with them assist their pupils' writing development more than those who do not?

2. How can teachers assist those pupils for whom writing is very difficult? What are the most appropriate techniques for helping those pupils to write well whose spelling and handwriting present apparently insurmountable problems?

3. How much time do pupils need to spend practising different kinds of writing if they are to become good writers? For example, if pupils were provided with more opportunities to practice 'creative' writing would they become more fluent at other kinds of writing, such as descriptive or expository prose? What is the best way to teach notetaking?

4. How can pupils be encouraged to reflect upon what they have written? What are the most appropriate ways to encourage pupils to proofread or revise their writing?

5. In what ways can learning be extended through the use of different kinds of writing? How can teachers of subjects other than English become more aware of the demands of writing in their subject-areas, so that they can provide appropriate assistance to their pupils?

6. Do pupils learning to write follow similar sequences of development? What stages of learning do they go through? Are there important differences among pupils in the ways they learn to write?

7. How can information about writing - the best ways to teach it, and the kinds of learning through writing which pupils develop while at school - best be disseminated to practising teachers?

Some overseas studies have already provided information which offers partial answers to some of these issues. However, very few studies have been conducted in New Zealand which suggest worthwhile procedures for teaching and learning writing. It is essential that a variety of

studies be carried out in the near future. Some possibilities include:-

1. Observational studies of young writers in their first few years at school and how they cope with the writing demands placed upon them. Such studies could use video recordings and extensive transcripts in order to illuminate the early stages of the process of learning to write.

2. Studies of writers of varying ages learning to write or to extend their writing skills through the use of microcomputers. How could the new technology assist the development of editing and revising procedures? In what ways could writers for whom spelling and handwriting present difficulties be assisted by using a wordprocessor?

3. Studies of teachers applying different methods of writing instruction, in order to compare the relative effectiveness of different teaching techniques. Such studies could be carried out at a number of different levels in several schools, but would require careful monitoring in order to isolate significant teaching and learning behaviours.

4. A longitudinal study which follows the development of a small group of children from their first attempts to write right through to their final year at school, or their becoming experienced, mature writers. Such a study, if carefully designed, would require many years of consistent effort but would provide information of a quality and extent which no study has yet achieved.

It is only through studies such as these, as part of a coordinated writing research programme, that teachers will obtain the information they need in order to become better teachers of writing. Research on writing is vital. As Uta Frith has said (*British Journal of Psychology*, 1981, Vol. 72, No. 4, p.505):

> *As everyone knows, there is going to be a revolution in the form of written communication. Its impact may be as big as printing once was. There is no doubt that the production and meta-production of visible language is an exciting area of study for the psychologist of the future.*

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PUPIL 'INTERVIEW' QUESTIONS (DAILY)

1. Instructions to Interviewers

Try to ask questions about the particular piece(s) of writing the pupil is writing, and what s/he is doing - whether they are having any difficulties and how these are approached - rather than general questions. Try to be reasonably specific, but without directing what the pupil does, or making positive/negative comments which will determine their behaviour. Adopt a low profile; if the pupil is not very forthcoming either change tack or come back later or another day. Attempt to elicit information through picking up cues from the pupil's own words, rather than asking ten questions in rapid succession (unless arising from the pupil's comments).

2. Possible General Questions (refer to the piece currently being written in class)

Do you know what you have to do? What are you going to do first? Have you done this kind of writing (work, exercise, etc.) before? How are you going to do this (pointing to some topic/exercises/ suggestions in a book, or a comment written down by the pupil, etc.)?

What are you going to write about in your story/poem/report? Have you got enough notes (if relevant)? Do you like writing notes? (Or stories, poems, reports, newspaper articles, etc.). If answer is 'No', try to elicit why - e.g., What do you find hard/difficult about writing notes? (Or stories, etc.).

Who will read this when you have finished writing it? (Teacher/other pupils/no one/parents, etc.). Do you read/go over your writing (or sentences, or paragraphs) when you have written something down? What do you do next? What are you looking for when you go over your writing? (Or: What things do you check?). What else do you look for?

Do you find this (whatever type of writing is involved) can be improved if you ask (teacher's name) what to do? Do you ask (teacher's name) for help a lot? What does s/he help you with?

3. Questions About Creative Writing (stories, poems, descriptions, etc.)

I see that you are writing about ... (topic). Why did you write about ... ? Have you written about ... before?

Have you read about ... ? Is this ... one of your favourite topics? After you've finished this sentence, what will you write about in the next one? Where do you get your ideas from?

Do you write stories (poems, etc.) at home? If 'Yes', how often? Do you let anyone else read them?

How do you know you've written enough? How long will this story (or poem, etc.) be?

Do you keep all your stories (or poems, etc.) in one place? Do you mind if I have a look at your folder (or whatever the stories are kept in)?

When you have finished writing this story, what will you do with it? (If it goes to the teacher: What does (the teacher's name) do with your stories (poems, etc.)? What kind of comments will s/he make on it, do you think?).

4. Questions About Report Writing (e.g., in Social Studies or Science)

I see that you are writing about ... (topic). Have you written about ... before? Have you read about ... ? Is this ... one of your favourite topics? When you've written this bit (or sentence, or completed the diagram, etc.) what are you going to do next? How will you ... (whatever is coming next, if the pupil knows)?

Will you write more about ... at home? Do you let someone else at home read what you are writing? Does (father/mother/brother, etc.) give you any help? What sort of help do they give you? Do you have any books at home which are useful for this project (or report, topic, etc.)? Can you tell me what they are?

Do you have to set out this project (or page, etc.) in a special way? What do you have to do (e.g., headings, where diagrams go, where the writing starts/stops on the page, etc.)? What sort of things will (teacher's name) help you with?

Who is going to read this when you have finished it? (i.e., in the class, whether teacher or pupils). Do you think it will be displayed somewhere? Whereabouts?

Do you keep all your Science projects (or Social Studies if this label is used, etc.) in one place? Do you look at them again when you have finished them?

5. Additional Topics

Do you do all your writing in a rough copy first? (If 'Yes': What changes do you make to it before you write out your final/good copy?). (If 'No': What kinds of writing do you write only one copy of?)

What kind of writing do you find hardest (easiest also) to do? Why do you think it is so hard (or so easy)?

6. Questions about Work which has been Assessed (marked, with written comments, etc.) by the teacher

When pupils have work handed back to them, try to go over some pieces with them and ask them questions about the comments and assessments they have received. However, tread carefully if the pupil has not understood what s/he should have done.

Discuss with them whether any improvements could have been made, e.g., the teacher has written ... here. Why do you think s/he made this comment? How could you have changed what you wrote to make it better?

If the pupil has trouble with any of the surface features of written language (e.g., spelling, punctuation, grammar) avoid questions such as 'Why did you make so many spelling mistakes?'. Focus instead on such themes as: 'Why do you think you found this word hard to spell?', 'Where do you think this sentence (referring to a specific one) could have ended?'.

NB: The focus of the observations and pupil interviews is on *how the pupils go about their writing*, i.e., the strategies they use and the difficulties they experience. However, this does not preclude asking questions about related issues, such as the amount of reading the pupil does, whether they enjoy playing with words, etc.

APPENDIX B: PUPIL INTERVIEW (FORMAL)

1. Of these four things that happen in school which one do you like most?

   Talking (i.e., *you* talking to the teacher or other pupils)
   Listening, to the teacher or other pupils?
   Reading
   Writing

   Why?

2. Which of those four do you think that you learn most from? Why?

3. Of those four which do you think is most like '*work*'?

4. What can you learn from writing that you can't learn from the others?

5. Of the following kinds of writing, which one do you like most?

   (i) Copying
   (ii) Making notes from books (like in Science)
   (iii) Sentences (often answers to questions)
   (iv) Stories
   (v) Projects

   Why?

6. Repeat question for 'which one do you like least?'. Why?

7. When you do the kinds of writing above, how do you go about each one? (Answer if possible for all kinds of writing).

8. Which of them do you think you learn most from?

9. Which of them do you get most of in school?

10. Why do you think that teachers set writing?

11. Who reads what you have written in school? Does anyone at home?

12. Teachers make comments on written work: sometimes these are spoken and sometimes they are written. Which of these is most useful?

13. Do you do any writing outside school? What kinds? Letters? A diary?

14. When you've done a piece of writing that you think is good, what is it that you think is good about it?

15. Who do you think teaches you to write in school?

16. How do you think you learn to write well?

17. Do you think that you get enough, too much, or too little writing to do?

18. What would you say was your greatest strength in your writing?

19. What do you think you have to work on most this year and perhaps next year to improve your writing?